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MAN AND THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

ARTHUR CHAMBERS

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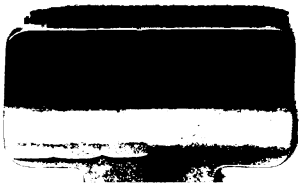

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Man and the Spiritual World

As Disclosed by the Bible

BY THE

REV. ARTHUR CHAMBERS

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TO MY FRIEND
THE REVEREND HERMITAGE CHARLES DAY, M.A.
WHOSE ENCOURAGING WORDS PROMPTED ME
TO PEN THESE PAGES
AND TO
THOSE HUNDREDS OF EARNEST ONES IN ALL PARTS
OF THE WORLD WHO HAVE WRITTEN
TO ME CONCERNING
"OUR LIFE AFTER DEATH,"
I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE THIS VOLUME

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Preface

A VERY few words will express the purpose of this book, and at the same time explain to the reader how it came to be written.

Six years ago, after very careful thought and prayer, I wrote a little work entitled, "Our Life after Death," and sent it forth to the world, hoping that it might, perhaps, enable a few to better understand certain great truths that I could not help thinking had been overlooked in much of the teaching in the past.

There were some who thought it an act of high presumption that I should dare to think on any lines that had not been laid down by the fathers, the schoolmen, and the divines of bygone centuries, as the only permanent way along which it is proper for Christian thought to run.

But the Christian public thought otherwise. My little book was greeted with a welcome that astonished me, and filled me with profound gratitude. Edition after edition of it was called for, and within twelve months it had found its way into

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thousands of Christian homes in England, America, on the Continent, in all parts of the world, and even in the far-away mission stations of India and Japan.

Nor is this all. Since its publication more than seventeen hundred letters concerning it have been sent to me from persons of all ranks and conditions in life; all telling me that by the blessing of God the little work has brought comfort and hope to mourning and desolate hearts, has strengthened faith, has flung a light upon difficulties that have perplexed and troubled earnest souls, and has scared away some of those dark and horrible shadows that long ago settled themselves upon Western theology and linger still.

In some of those letters (particularly those received from brother clergymen and other Christian teachers), I was asked questions as to points concerning the Spiritual World, and the character of the life of those who had passed into it. What were my ideas on the subject? Did I think the Bible gave us a sufficient revelation to make it possible to formulate a complete and coherent statement as to Life Beyond?

These questions set me thinking. I began to see that many phases of revealed truth concerning the

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Spiritual had not been dealt with by me in "Our Life after Death."

Could I remedy this? Could I complete the subject on which I had already written? Could I do anything to stem the ever-increasing tide of emigration of men and women, in England and America, from the ranks of Christianity to a Modern Spiritualism and Theosophy, without Christ, by showing to them that there is no need for them to go to those systems for the knowledge of the Spiritual for which they crave; that the truth, however dimly perceived in the past, *is all in the Bible*, and that neither Modern Spiritualism nor Theosophy can tell us more about that truth than the Scripture does.

I felt I could do this. I felt that a Power from without (God's Power, I think) was drawing me on to try and do this.

I have tried, and this volume is the result. It is intended to be a companion-book to "Our Life after Death," and I have purposely so constructed it that those who have not read the sister-volume, may yet be able to intelligently follow the line of thought pursued in both works.

One word more. This book is not written to amuse idlers and novelty seekers, but to try and make great truths plainer to earnest and inquiring

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souls. To these latter I say, Do not read these pages cursorily and carelessly, as if you were reading a three-volume novel. Do not condemn the work unread because you happen to catch sight of a word or two that upsets your preconceived ideas. But read *all* that has been written after much thought and care, and then honestly ask yourself, Is this author right? In the light of Divine revelation, as it shines upon us through the pages of Scripture, are these things so?

ARTHUR CHAMBERS.

THE VICARAGE, BROCKENHURST,
HANTS, *June*, 1900.

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Man and the Spiritual World

As Disclosed by the Bible

PART I

An Important Question

WHAT will become of us when we die? This is a question that we have asked ourselves again and again in the course of our life. Probably all persons, except those who are very thoughtless, or very bad, have put it to themselves at one time or another.

It is an *important* question. It thrusts itself upon us, however much our business, our pleasures and other concerns may distract us; however devoid we may be of religious instincts, and however indifferent to solemn matters.

Yes, and it is also a *pressing* question. Perhaps we do not like it, or take the slightest pains to answer it. We may have made up our mind to thrust it aside and forget it; but all to no purpose. No thoughtful person can effectually evade it. For

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a while we may succeed in scaring it away by worldly excitement, but it soon comes back, as importunate as ever, to startle, perplex and even annoy us again.

Persistently it tracks the footsteps of the thinker all along the pathway of his life, and grows more clamorous as the end is neared. It calls upon him to give an answer. It even wins over to its side the man's own conscience, until that inward monitor reproaches him if he makes no effort to supply that answer. There is no chance of escape unless we never pause to think, and that to most of us is an impossibility. Moreover, the common circumstances of every-day life seem as if they were in league with this haunting question.

We take up a newspaper and read the accounts of disaster and death.

An earthquake has laid a town in ruins, and hundreds of men, women and children have perished in the calamity. An ocean-liner has struck on a sunken rock, and crew and passengers have found a watery grave.

There has been an explosion in a coal-mine, and scores of poor colliers have been suddenly blasted into death. The plague has swept away a quarter of the population of an eastern city. A cyclone, a

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thunder-storm, a railway accident, a war, or a murderer's hand, has violently hustled fellow-beings from the stage of physical existence.

"Very shocking!" we exclaim, as we lay aside the paper; and then we mentally ask, "What of those curtailed lives, those victims? After death, is there anything for them?"

Sometimes the question thrusts itself upon us in another way. It starts up out of the midst of circumstances more nearly and more painfully affecting us.

The messenger of Death has entered our own home. His icy touch has fallen upon one very dear to us—upon a wife, a mother, or a child.

Then, most likely, our first thought has been of ourself. We have wept because of our own misery and despair. An awful void has been opened in our life, and the sense of a tremendous personal loss has oppressed us. Without meaning it, we have allowed grief to project self to the forefront of the experience.

Then, after a while, when the first burst of our anguish has expended itself, our sorrow has assumed another and a better complexion. The consideration of self, under the wrong done us by Death, has ceased to be uppermost. A nobler

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feeling has asserted itself. Concern for another—for the dear one who has died—has taken the first place in our thoughts. Into our grief there has been imported a distressful pity and concern for that still form lying upstairs in the darkened chamber, because an overwhelming loss and a horrible oblivion seem to have overtaken her. What if she should never see, hear and speak again! What a torture to think that a beautiful world of sights and sounds should continue as before, and be nothing to her!

While standing, thus pitiful and broken-hearted, beside that figure so pale and passionless, have you not asked yourself, tenderly and yearningly, "What of *her?* What becomes of us when we die?"

Have I awakened painful memories in describing an experience that you may have had? If so, believe me I have an object in doing this. It may be that thereby you will be led to read carefully and thoughtfully the following pages, in which the attempt will be made to give the *true* answer to this important question.

The Question answered in Different Ways

At the outset of our consideration of this subject we shall do well to notice a fact that should not be

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overlooked. It is that the question, in its own nature, is not only an important one, but mankind in all ages has perseveringly regarded it as such. The most casual reader of human history can hardly have failed to see that all sections of the race have made some attempt to answer it.

What is the underlying significance of those many and variant religions of mankind? Many are puzzled exceedingly by their number and dissimilarity. And, indeed, it does seem strange, and even bewildering, that the human family should be split up into so many religious organisations. What barriers of separation between man and man are expressed by the terms "Christian," "Jew," "Mohammedan," "Buddhist," "Hindoo," etc.!

In spite of national distinctions, all in that great family are constitutionally allied; all bear the same relationship to the earth on which they live, and all are confronted with the same experience of dying. And yet men have ranged themselves, not in *one*, but in many religious communities. Then, look at those communities. Each is detached from, and often intensely hostile to, all the others. Each has its own peculiar ideas, teachings and worship.

Does not all this variety, it has been asked, afford a presumption that religion is not true? If it were

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true; if it owed its origin to God, would there not be uniformity in regard to religious ideas?

Many have reasoned thus, and labelled religion as false because beliefs and forms are unlike.

But such reasoners are wrong in their judgment. They should have looked more deeply into the matter. Behind all the differences, there lies the oneness for which they seek. As the starting-point and basis of the religions of the world, they will find the idea of the Life to come. Not one of these religions is without it. All of them, however much overlaid with error and superstition, are expressions of sincere effort on the part of men to answer that ever-recurring question—"What will become of us when we die?"

If we remember this, and, moreover, bear in mind how dissimilar are the moral, intellectual and spiritual capacities of men, it need not surprise us to find, as we proceed with the inquiry, that the question has been answered in various ways.

In the judgment of the writer, some of the answers given are wholly incorrect; while others fall short of the truth. It will be well to briefly consider both of these classes of answer, in order the better to clear the ground for that which is viewed as the true answer.

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I.—The Answers that are Wholly Incorrect.

(A). That of the *Materialist.*

The answer he gives is determined by his conception of man; and that is an unworthy and disappointing one. He takes a very low view of himself and his fellows. Appraised at his valuation, man is no more than an ingenious piece of highly-organised and developed matter; a clever result of physical Nature, reached after ages of effort, under a law of Evolution. He declares him to be, in every part of his constitution, a material being, a parcel of animated molecules, and naught besides. He denies that he possesses a spirit and a spirit-body, and gets over the difficulty of mind by accounting it the outcome of certain unknown, cunning combination or configurations of *matter.* Consequently, the death of a man's body is regarded as the dispersion and obliteration of the mind, and the complete extinction of the man himself.

Put our question to the Materialist, and he will reply, "At death, our bodies are resolved into the physical elements of which they are composed, and *ourselves will cease to be.*"

It would not be difficult to assign several strong reasons why this answer is, assuredly, wrong. We

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take but one of these reasons, which we consider a convincing one. It is this.

The materialistic view of man practically charges God, or Nature (if the existence of God be denied), with acting in a way that is inconsistent and absurd. Consider how the case stands. The Materialist declares that men are wiped out of existence at death, and yet is compelled to admit that the race most strangely, throughout the ages, has tenaciously clung to the conviction that there is a Life beyond the grave.

This conviction has not been confined to any particular section or sections of mankind. "All sorts and conditions," civilised and uncivilised, have held it from the dawn of human history, and we cling to it just as eagerly in the present day. But is that not very remarkable from the standpoint of the Materialist? In spite of appearances suggesting extinction when the body dies, here stands this great human family, so complex in ideas and religions, resolutely refusing to accept the idea, and declining to yield to the evidence of the physical senses. Here it is exhibiting a fundamental oneness; believing in, asking for, and struggling after, a Life to come; forming itself, sometimes wisely and at other times unwisely, into huge religious organisations, for the

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reason that it thinks religion will equip men for that Life, and that sacrifice and heroic effort are well spent if it can be gained.

Can we account for this if man's aspiration for a future be no more than a fond conceit, a pleasing dream?

How came this aspiration to exist if no *satisfying* of it is to be vouchsafed?

We consider ourselves very much wiser than insects, fishes and birds. Are we actually so? If the Materialist's answer be right, are we not immeasurably less wise than they? We never heard of fish making strenuous and persistent efforts to plant themselves on Alpine crags, nor of eagles who spent a lifetime in considering how they might explore the bed of the ocean. God has not fashioned them to be so foolish and impractical as to strive after the impossible. And yet the Materialist's theory would commit us to the inconsistency of believing that man has been always doing this.

The fact is, man's craving for a Hereafter is an implanted instinct. Unpoisoned by negative thought, and not drugged by vice, or worldliness, the thoughts of a man turn as naturally to a Hereafter existence as the desire of a bird turns to the air, or that of a wild animal to the woods.

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What, we ask, can be seen throughout the realm of Nature with regard to instincts? Is it not this—that no instinct, as far as we know, exists in any creature lower than man for which the correspondence, the satisfying, has not been provided.

No bird would beat its wings against the bars of its cage in its desire to fly were flying an impossibility to its race, nor would fresh-water fish leave their river-haunts and battle their way to the vast, mysterious ocean if that ocean had no existence. God is never untrue nor inconsistent. He does not mock His works. He never endows a creature with an instinct that points to nothing.

Do you then observe the difficulty into which the Materialist has plunged himself, in asserting that man's existence ceases at death, and that his aspiration for a Life Beyond has no correspondence *in fact?* In that case, God, Who is so true and consistent in regard to all the lower creatures, is heartless and inconsistent in His dealing with Man, the topstone of His earthly creation. We are asked to believe that He, Who has never mocked a bird, a spider, or a worm, has cruelly mocked *us;* that He has given us an instinct that is not to be satisfied, and, in other words, has implanted in our mind an ineradicable conviction of a Life to come, while

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knowing, at the same time, that man would never attain it.

We ask, do you think that this is likely? Can you conceive of God as being so petty and so cruel? Is not the idea an outrage to common sense, a denial of the principles of true science, and a slander upon the Being "Whose understanding is infinite"?

And yet to this conclusion we must come if the grave be affixed as the boundary of human existence.

On this ground, therefore, apart from other weighty considerations, we reject the answer of the Materialist as being wholly incorrect.

(B). The answer of the *Agnostic*.

The term "Agnostic" is a comparatively modern one, and not all of my readers may exactly know the meaning of it. A few words of explanation will, therefore, not be out of place.

The word "Agnostic" is applied to those who, in rejecting the Christian and other systems of revealed Religion, consider that no sufficient evidence has been adduced to warrant their believing in a Spiritual World and a future life for mankind. The term itself has been derived from a Greek word ἀγνωσία (agnōsia), denoting a condition of not knowing, or ignorance.

Correctly speaking, therefore, an Agnostic is a

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person who *does not know*. It is wrong and unfair to class him either with the Atheist who denies the existence of God, or with the Materialist who does not acknowledge the existence of spirit. The Agnostic, if he be consistent with his name, denies neither.

He recognises the necessity for a First-cause, whether as a Person or a Force, but declares it to be "unknowable." In regard to spirit and a life to come, he concedes that both *may* exist, but at the same time declares that he knows nothing concerning them.

So far, the Agnostic is logical as regards his theory. Were he to go no further than this, we should not class him among those who give, what we deem, an incorrect answer to the important question we are considering. When we put a question to a person, and he candidly admits that he possesses no knowledge whatsoever of the subject, the matter is at an end as far as he is concerned. Having confessed his inability to give any answer whatsoever, his opinion can be of little or no weight. We drop him quietly out of the reckoning, feeling sorry that indifference, or a predisposition to negative thought, has stranded him in a state of ignorance.

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But, unfortunately, the Agnostic will not suffer us to dismiss him in this way. He does not stop at the simple and, no doubt, honest assertion that he himself does not know. He goes very much further. He oversteps the boundaries defined by his system. He gets out of his legitimate sphere of *not* knowing into one of *knowing*. Practically, he forgets that he has to be agnostic, and becomes gnostic (a knower). He confidently affirms not only that *he* has no knowledge of a Spiritual Universe, but also that he *knows* that no one else can possibly possess any such knowledge.

The following quotations are the statements of men eminent in the ranks of Agnosticism. "No knowledge of a Spiritual World does, or can, exist for mankind." "Our own and all other being is a mystery *for ever beyond* our comprehension."

Here, then, we have the answer of the Agnostic. We submit that it is incorrect for two reasons.

First, how is it possible for any one or any body of thinkers to define what knowledge can, or can not, be possessed by *future* generations? Has the veil of the Hereafter been lifted for them, so that they are able to perceive what will or will not be? We venture to think that man's attainments of knowledge in the past make it very presumptuous

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to affix limits as to what he will know in the time to come. Moreover, how is it that the Agnostic, who professes to know so little, can be so confident that the mystery of our being will be "*for ever* beyond our comprehension"? Either he must be gifted with extraordinary foresight, or he is indulging in speculation.

Secondly, it is *not* a fact that "no knowledge of a Spiritual World does or can exist for mankind." We assert, just as positively as the Agnostic denies, that an overwhelming mass of evidence has been, and is still being, collected, that proves both the existence of a universe of spirit, and man's intimate relationship to it. We shall treat of this later. But it may be urged in respect to this evidence, how, then, is it that it is not of sufficient weight with the Agnostic to lead him to a conclusion opposite to that he gives? He is sincere and intelligent, is he not? Unquestionably so as regards many who lay claim to this name. Then why does he reject a mass of evidence concerning spiritual facts that is accepted by others?

The reply is simple. It is because of the benumbing and injurious effects of the Agnostic system of thought upon the mind and spiritual faculties of the man.

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There are two classes of Agnostics; one of which we should pity and the other blame. There are the earnest-minded men who think deeply, and those who are not in earnest, and only think superficially. Many a thoughtful Agnostic would like to be able to believe in the Spiritual, and many of us cherish the hope that, because he is a sincere seeker after truth, one day, in this life or the next, the perception of the truth will come to him. But, meanwhile, he has handicapped himself. After an unsuccessful effort, or, perhaps, several unsuccessful efforts, to acquire a knowledge of the Spiritual, he came to the conclusion that no knowledge of it was possible either to himself or to others. In that conviction he settled himself. Thenceforth, the system of thought he has adopted requires him to view every scrap of evidence relating to a Super-physical World as no more than imagination, superstition, or trickery. In the face of his conviction that naught can be ever known on the subject, how is it possible for him to regard such evidence otherwise than as being unworthy of serious consideration?

Such is the mental attitude of many, and it is a barrier to all ordinary chances of enlightenment. As long as it be maintained, the wonders of the

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Spiritual will be veiled. The men thus intellectually constituted have as little chance of knowing anything about a Spiritual Universe as an Englishman would have of possessing a knowledge of China, were he to antecedently convince himself that no such country exists, or that a knowledge of it is impossible to a European.

Look, for a moment, at the other class of Agnostics,—those who only think superficially, and are not really in earnest about the future. They reject all evidence relating to a Spiritual World for quite another reason than that to which we have just referred. They have no inclination towards a subject which is difficult, sobering, and even disturbing. To properly consider it entails a tax upon mind and time, and it does not harmonise with the life of business or excitement they are leading. Agnosticism exactly meets their case. At times they are not quite comfortable in turning their back upon serious thought. The words spoken by a dying parent, perhaps, are remembered now and again, and, like an obstacle in a stream, rather disturb the current of their irreligious life.

Agnosticism supplies the means whereby they may justify themselves. It salves their conscience, and gives a pretext for indifference. Assuring them

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that nothing can be known of the Hereafter, what more sensible than that they should not worry themselves about the matter! Were not the words and prayers of that dear old father or mother very touching, but no more than the outcome of a kind heart and a pious delusion?

Then, again, is there not a certain advantage in openly proclaiming their disbelief in the Spiritual? Their Agnosticism puts them outside the herd of commonplace men and women who go to church or chapel, and believe in religion. In standing apart from these they become conspicuous. Their adoption of negative views renders them more interesting to friends and acquaintances than they could ever hope to become as ordinary believers in the Gospel of Christ. They experience an undercurrent of self-satisfaction in supposing themselves identified with clever men outside the camp of Christianity. It is a pleasant conceit to many of this class that Agnosticism stamps them with a sort of hall-mark of intellectual superiority.

In this way does the system of Agnosticism injure spiritually, mentally and morally, many of its supporters. It encourages indifference and fosters pride.

(C). The answer of the *Christian-Materialist.*

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Among the incorrect answers given to this question is yet another. It comes from a quarter in which we should not look for it. It is that of a section of Christians whom we may describe (and who, indeed, describe themselves) as Christian-Materialists.

They do not constitute a very large body, but are sufficient in number to form a distinct school of thought as regards this subject. A few of them belong to the Church of England, but most are to be found in the ranks of Nonconformity. Their teaching is as follows. They accept, in common with other Christians, the great underlying truths of the Religion of Christ, but with one very important exception. They wholly dissent from the main body of believers in their view of man's nature, and what befalls him at death. They regard his physical body, not merely as an *encasement* in which for a while he dwells, but as the *man himself*. It is the all of him. Apart from the body, they believe he has no soul, spirit or mind capable under any circumstances of existence. The three terms just mentioned, they consider, are no more than names denoting characteristics pertaining to matter. Thus the soul is said to be the animating principle that constitutes the difference between a living and a

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dead body, the spirit they account the breath, while the mind is the intelligence which is lost when the body expires, in the same way as the flame goes out when the oil in a lamp is expended.

Consequently, the death of a man's body is viewed by them as the death of *him*. Then he passes into non-existence, and all that remains of him is a dead material form. Not only has there become a gap, a blank, in his consciousness, but the man himself has gone; his mind and his being have evaporated. After the work of physical dissolution has been accomplished, the particles that remain are no more a man than the component parts of a time-piece are a clock, after those parts have been separated, scattered and their co-relation destroyed. Up to this point, the irreligious Materialist and the Christian-Materialist are in agreement; but here they part company. The former asserts that Death is man's destroyer *for ever;* the latter thinks it is such *only for a time.*

The Christian-Materialist acknowledges no Intermediate Life, but believes in a future Heaven. According to his theory, man's "mortal remains," disintegrated and dispersed by death, will be collected and reorganised on a distant Resurrection-Day, and from them the power of God will construct a *new*

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man to live for ever. It is not difficult to show that this answer is, undoubtedly, wrong.

In the first place, how, apart from *continuity* of being, can a person's conduct on earth complexion his future character and condition? Reward or punishment, if it be just, can only be apportioned to the individual who has merited or incurred the one or the other. We cannot conceive of God rewarding or punishing anyone for the good or evil done by another. But if the mind and consciousness of a man, which constitute his manhood and lie at the root of all action, be annihilated at death, then the man himself will have gone. To reward or punish *him* will be impossible. Re-creation may summon into existence another man, who may stand as the representative of him who has passed into non-existence; but it will not be the *same* being. There will be wanting the connecting link—the continuity of being—between the man who was and who perished, and the *new* creature called into existence. A yawning gulf of oblivion would make the earth-born man and the resurrected man detached and unrelated existences. Thus there would be no reason or principle in either rewarding or punishing the newly-created one.

Secondly, an objection can be urged against the

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view of the Christian-Materialist, which applies equally against that of the irreligious Materialist.

Neither of them gives any satisfactory explanation of the fact of Mind. If it be true that Mind is but an effluence of Matter and absolutely dependent upon it for its existence, how comes it that, at times, Mind is most clear and vigorous, although a feeble and dying body has placed Matter at its greatest disadvantage? This is not explainable on the supposition that Mind is an outcome of Matter, but it is explainable on the hypothesis that it is not.

Thirdly, we submit that the Christian-Materialist's view is opposed to the statements of Holy Scripture. And be it remembered that he appeals to the Bible as the voice of God on this subject. Suppose we weigh his statements in the scales of his own approving.

What do we find? That he ignores (no doubt, unintentionally), a mass of Biblical testimony that shows—(*a*) that man continues a *conscious existence* in passing through the incident of dying, and (*b*) that his future acquirement of a resurrection-body will neither necessitate the creation of a *new being*, nor the reanimation of the dead particles that had constituted his earthly body.

This testimony we shall refer to later; in the

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meanwhile, two passages from the New Testament will suffice to substantiate the assertions just made.

In Luke xvi. 19-31 v., our Lord tells a parable concerning a rich man and Lazarus. He represents them both, immediately after death, as *living and conscious.* That, to say the least of it, is awkward for the theory we are combating.

In 1 Cor. xv. 37 and 50 v., St. Paul writes, "Thou sowest *not* that body that shall be," and "*Flesh* and *blood* cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." The Apostle, therefore, in language as forcible as it can be, clearly repudiates the crude notion that the dead matter laid in a grave will constitute either the man in the future, or be the ingredients of his resurrection-body.

What we gather from Scripture is, that man in "the Life of the World to come," *i. e.*, in the Life that lies beyond the Intermediate State, will be "clothed upon," but not with a vesture compounded of physical particles that serve, after his death, for the bodies of other men, animals and plants.

II.—The Answers that fall short of the Truth.

Under this heading we place:

(A). The *general* answer given by those hundreds of millions who are neither Materialists nor Agnos-

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tics, *i. e.*, by those persons who may be classed as religious. What say the Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, Hindoos, Buddhists, etc., and even the Pagans? Surely their testimony should be taken into account.

We have already noticed the fact that there is a root-belief, a common starting-point of all these religions and all the variety of ideas concerning God and truth. It is the conviction that the physical body is not the all of a man, and that its death does not include his extinguishment.

With the exception of the Christian-Materialists, all in these great religious camps believe that there is a Life for man when his body shall have gone into the grave. However different and conflicting the conceptions of that Life may be, the fact of the Life itself is admitted. Whether one accepts the ordinary Christian view, that a man at death goes to "a happy land, far, far away," or that of the Jew that he passes into Sheol, or that of the Mohammedan, that he enters a sensuous Paradise, or that of the Indian, that he finds himself in "a happy hunting-ground," it all amounts to the same thing; the root-belief of each one's creed is the same; all acknowledge that death does not destroy the *individual.*

So far, this *general* reply approaches the truth

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concerning the Hereafter of man; but it does not satisfy us. We are profoundly thankful that the majority of our fellow-creatures share our belief that we are not merely pieces of animated clay. It strengthens us in our conviction that a Hereafter will be, since so widely disseminated an instinct exists. But we crave to know more.

It is a tremendous relief to turn from the blank of Materialism and the doubt of Agnosticism, to the thought of being *something* and of going *somewhere* when we die; but, at the same time, we cannot help crying out for fuller knowledge as to that "something" and "somewhere." The "happy land" of the ordinary Christian is not exhilarating. It rather depresses us. It is "far, far away." Its distance in unexplored and mysterious space robs it of much of its attracting power, and seems to immeasurably widen the gulf of separation between us and a dear one who has gone there. And so we are dissatisfied with the *general* answer of the religions. It is right as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It acknowledges a great principle, but we seek for information more *definite* and *particular*. And this we do in spite of the frowns of lovers of vagueness, because we believe that that information has been given.

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(B). Next, we turn to an answer given by a large section of Christians, who dissent from the teaching of the Church of England and other great branches of the Universal Church, not on the point of man's survival of physical death, but as to the *character* of the Life upon which he enters when the earth-life has closed.

The Church of England proclaims that at death a person passes into an Intermediate Life; so called because it is a mid-way existence between this physical life and Heaven, or Hell.

A very prevalent belief (less common than it was), held by our Dissenting brethren is that, at the death of a man's body, he goes, if good, at once to Heaven, or, if bad, at once to Hell. When the great preacher, Mr. Spurgeon, passed away, a notice was affixed to the railings of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, informing the public that he had "entered *Heaven*" at a certain hour.

The Westminster Catechism—a statement of Christian doctrine accepted by many—altogether ignores an Intermediate existence, and in the clearest terms declares that the souls of the righteous are perfected, and pass straight to Heaven at the moment of departure from earth.

We shall show that the acceptance of this view

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stamps as inaccurate many of the statements of the Bible. The New Testament discloses the fact of an Intermediate World.

(C). There remains still another answer to which we must refer. It is that of many who admit the fact of an Intermediate World, but have no *definite* idea of the man, as to his nature and being, in that World.

Their answer to the question—"What will become of us when we die?"—stops short before an all-important point is reached. Let me explain what I mean.

Ask many English Churchmen in what way they think of a person who has departed this life. They will tell you they believe him to be still living. So far—good; and every Christian, Churchman or Dissenter (except the Christian-Materialist) will give the same reply.

Ask, further, *where* do they suppose him to be living? Well-instructed Churchmen will answer at once, "In an Intermediate Life."

Go on with the inquiry. Ask next, *how* do they think of that person in the Intermediate World? Is their idea of him a *definite* one? Do they picture him *as a man?* Has he, now that his physical body has been cast aside, any characteristics entitling him

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to that name? For example, does he possess *shape?* Can he still *think, speak, hear, see and be seen?*

At this point, the one questioned will, in all probability, hesitate and commence to beat about the bush. You know at once what kind of answer you will get. It will be a vague one, full of generalities and pious Agnosticism.

He does not think that anyone can possibly know aught of the condition of man after death. He believes that he continues to exist in some way or another; but as to *how* he does so—well, it is all mystery and uncertainty.

Very likely, if he be of a philosophical bent of mind, he will go a step further, and tell you his conviction is that the subject does not lend itself to investigation, and that, moreover, there is a savour of presumption in wanting to know, or trying to know, more about it than is commonly taught in pulpits and books.

You perfectly well see how the case stands with your friend. He has no idea at all of a *man* in the World Beyond. In whatever way he pictures him, as he will be one day in Heaven or Hell, it is not of a *man* in the Intermediate World that he is thinking. Probably he would find it difficult to define his idea of him there, but were he to do so, it would be no

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more than that of an essence; an unorganised, formless, intangible, surviving *something;* a shade, an airiness, a nebulosity; no more resembling a man than gas resembles coal.

So hazy a conception of ourselves Beyond is, of course, a misfortune to the Religion of Christ, as well as to believers themselves. There are thousands at the present time in this country and in America, who have deserted the Christian Religion, and swelled the ranks of Theosophy and Modern Spiritualism, for no other reason than that they imagine these two last-named systems present a better and more definite idea of the World of Spirit than the Religion of Christ does.

It is very regrettable; but the fault does not lie with Christianity, but with its exponents. In what has been taught, as well as in what has been done, Christianity has not always corresponded with the religion of its Divine Founder.

In the hands of preachers and teachers of that which we account a revelation from God, there has been, all through the centuries, a text-book—the Bible. It is full of clear information concerning a Spirit-World. And yet, strange to say, how little more than the elementary truth of the bare existence of such a World has been grasped by the greater

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number of Christian folk. Conventionality has lain as an incubus upon Christian thought. Teachers in the past have failed to perceive how much has been disclosed in the Bible in regard to a Life to come, and unfortunately, it has been the fashion in Church and Chapel, to slavishly bow to "the traditions of the Fathers," and to account it impossible that later generations may have a fuller understanding of this particular subject than the generations that preceded them. Thus the avenues to fuller knowledge have been closed, and the indefinite thought of the past still lingers in the sermons and religious literature of the present.

Nor is this all. This vagueness of idea does a wrong to the believer himself. It deprives him of a power that could exorcise the haunting spectre of Death.

In spite of their trust in God and belief in a future, many of the best, sincerest and most stout-hearted of Christians are appalled at the prospect of dying. Brave, good and devout men and women have shown cowardice then. Can that be as the Christ of the Gospel intended? Surely not. We can understand a person feeling regretful, and even sorrowful, in leaving dear ones and a world in which happiness has been found; but it is an inconsistency

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that he, as a Christian, should be *appalled* at the thought of departure.

There are some who sing hymns that represent them as panting to die, and then exhibit an abject terror when there is the barest probability that God will take them at their word. What shall we say of such? Must we label them as insincere? No, I think not: that terror is only the outcome of a vagueness of idea concerning the Hereafter. They have no definite thought as to *what, how* and *where* they will be when the curtain shall have fallen on the first act of their existence, and they reasonably shudder at plunging into the unpictured and unknown.

To every thoughtful mind the horror of dying must exist if the reality of the Spiritual be not perceived. The reader may ask—To what cause do you attribute this vagueness? We believe it to be the ordinary religious idea (accepted on no basis of proof), that a spirit must necessarily be a being *shapeless and unorganised.*

This, we shall have to show, is an assumption not in accordance with what the Bible teaches, and, moreover, contrary to the evidence of a Spiritual Universe, vouchsafed to thousands of our fellow-creatures in all the ages.

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We reject, then, the idea that man, after death, is a formless essence that floats about in a world of shadow and intangibility, and thinks that there is available more solid information respecting him in that world than has been "dreamed of in the philosophy" of many.

The Source to which We may look for a True Answer to the Question

In the foregoing pages we have seen that mankind has answered the question we are considering very differently and oppositely.

This fact will affect an inquirer into the subject in one of two ways. Either it will lead him to the conclusion that these conflicting opinions constitute the proof that no *reliable* information concerning the Spiritual is obtainable—at all events so long as we remain in this world; or it will cause him to ask if there be no *authoritative source* to which he may turn for enlightenment and assurance in his perplexity. Should he be affected in the way as first indicated, most probably he will dismiss the subject from his mind. He will view it as outside the radius of practical thought. To him it will seem a waste of time and energy to attempt to fathom a mystery that has already baffled so many. Not

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even the death of a dear one will galvanise him into mental activity sufficient to make the effort. And so he will quietly and lazily acquiesce in the commonplace conclusion that nothing definite can be known of the Hereafter on this side of the grave.

Many assume this tone, and among them not a few of the teachers of religion. These latter do not hesitate to plainly tell their hearers and readers that they must not expect to know any more about an Intermediate Life than the simple fact that it exists.

Is it any wonder that the sermons and books of these apostles of vagueness have little or no influence in making men realise "the powers of the world to come" (Heb. vi. 5 v.)?

How can the thoughts of one be attracted to that which is presented as little better than an abstraction?

Depend upon it, the thousands who are altogether uninterested as to their future, would not be so if the clergy and ministers of Christ's Good Tidings could themselves believe and teach that a knowledge of facts pertaining to the Spiritual is not unattainable.

Further, we are convinced that this disposition to rest contented with vagueness is an unworthy and an unscientific one. He is not considered a wise

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man who refuses to persevere in his search for truth because others have wholly, or partially, failed to understand it.

Astronomical science would never have revealed the marvels of the heavens to men, had astronomers abandoned their search for truth on account of the erroneous ideas of the planetary system that found acceptance in the past.

However great may have been the diversity of ideas, however little the actual knowledge gained by men in this or in preceding centuries, as regards the Universe of Spirit, it does not justify us in assigning the subject to the region of the "unknowable" and impracticable. Rather should we see in those manifold conjectures and partial knowledge a finger-post pointing in quite another direction—viz, towards the *likelihood* of fuller information.

All through the ages man has been persistently struggling to "pierce the veil." Would not his efforts have long since been discontinued if God had intended that, on this side, the "veil" should never be pierced?

Then again, many of us think it is not unlikely that men living in this and succeeding ages will understand the facts of the Spiritual Universe far better than the men who lived in past centuries have

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done. Such a statement, I know, sounds dreadfully "unorthodox" to those who think that the Fathers and divines of certain "favoured" epochs reached a height of religious knowledge beyond which it is impossible to advance. But what more reasonable than that there should be growth and development in man's thought and perceptions of the Spiritual, as there undoubtedly has been in all other departments of mental activity!

Seeing that man has advanced by leaps and bounds in other kinds of knowledge during the last three centuries, is it to be supposed that he must come to a standstill in his religious knowledge, at a point reached by the Fathers!

The Saviour once said, "He *shall* teach you all things" (John xiv. 26 v.), and these words may mean very much more than is imagined by those who think that truth has been stereotyped for all ages by saints of long ago. Christ's promise may be in course of fulfilment still. God may teach men spiritual truth as He has taught them every other kind of truth—gradually and slowly.

The Christian Church has a text-book which will not be superseded nor altered; but it is quite possible that it will be better understood than it has been. A brighter light of meaning may gleam upon

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its precious words; men may lay aside the spectacles of other men with which alone they have been accustomed to read it; and the thinkers of a later age may perceive in its sacred pages grand truths but imperfectly perceived by the theologians of the past. Churchmen of the future may be able to do what the astronomers of to-day can do—to read in the book of the sky much that an earlier age had failed to read.

We mentioned a class of persons who are led by the diversity of opinion that exists on the subject of a Spiritual World to seek an *authoritative source* to which with confidence they may turn for enlightenment. Does that source exist? Have we anything in the shape of reliable testimony to which we may appeal, so as to be able to sift out and systematise the truth from amid these guesses and conjectures of men?

Yes. Man has not been left unpitied and unaided in his efforts to discover the secrets of his being. In addition to a mass of evidence establishing the fact of a Spiritual Universe, collected in every age and from every quarter of the world, he has been granted another and a special revelation. During the centuries God has been slowly but surely disclosing the mystery of the Super-physical. Before Christ, this

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revelation was but *partial;* it disclosed much to man, but left much still undisclosed.

When Christ came the revelation grew brighter and fuller. And this revelation is contained in *the Bible.* There, if we but read honestly and intelligently, may be found the true, and at the same time, the *definite* answer to our question—"What will become of us when we die?"

How we are to deal with the Testimony of the Bible

In turning to the Bible for the information we seek, we must be prepared to lay aside certain preconceived ideas that we may have formed, and to deal with the book in a sensible way.

I say "a sensible way," for the reason that not all persons so deal with it. Some persons, by their lack of common sense in treating Scripture, practically close and bar the door of knowledge against themselves. It is a thousand pities both for their sake and the cause of Christ that it should be so! For example, we shall not expect to find in some parts of the Bible the clearness and fulness of information that we shall look for in other parts. We ought to remember that the age in which a writer lived, and the degree of enlightenment vouchsafed

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to him, will necessarily determine the amount of importance to be attached to his statements. We do not look for the noon-tide light when the dawn is but breaking, or the morning is young.

In the Old Testament we shall find the words of men who wrote in the twilight of Divine revelation. Some of these knew little about a Life Beyond; as in the case of Solomon when he stated, "A man hath no pre-eminence above a beast . . . who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?" (Eccles. iii. 19 and 22 v.).

Others show that a fuller knowledge had been acquired; as in the case of David, who could say, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me" (Ps. xxiii. 4 v.).

On the other hand, in the New Testament we shall find the utterances of Christ Himself. He stood in the broad daylight. He knew all the secrets of the Spiritual, was Himself the "Light" and the "Truth," and "brought life and immortality *to light* through the Gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10 v.). There, too, we have the writings of men who learned the truth from His Divine lips, and were specially equipped at Pentecost to transmit it to the world. Bearing all this in mind, we shall avoid the foolish mistake

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that so many good Christians have made, viz, of placing *all* statements of Scripture on the same level of revelation.

Remembering that the fuller truth relating to the Hereafter was not disclosed until the Christ came, we shall not commit the absurdity of looking for it in the writings of men who lived before the knowledge had been imparted. And yet this is the principle upon which no inconsiderable amount of theology has been built. Take an instance. Our Lord and His Apostles bear testimony, in terms as clear as can be, that there is an Intermediate World, and yet, strange to say, thousands and thousands of pious readers of Scripture have completely failed to perceive this truth.

Perhaps you ask—how is it possible? The answer is—because there are a number of texts in the Old Testament that reveal that their writers had little or no knowledge of the existence of that World.

The persons to whom we have alluded suppose it to be an indication of faith and a mark of "orthodoxy" to try and force the fuller statements of the New Testament into agreement with the imperfect statements of the Old. Of course, they have not succeeded; their principle of interpretation has been wrong. Instead of looking forward for illumination

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they had been looking backward. They have directed their gaze towards the twilight of human knowledge and attempted in vain to wrench the words of Jesus and His Apostles into conformity with the words of men who stood on a much lower platform of spiritual thought and enlightenment. Thus, by distorting the statements of the New Testament by stripping them of their natural and grammatical sense, and by infusing into them meanings never intended, the utmost has been done to "bring again the shadow of the degrees" on the sun-dial of revelation.

Christ's truth-disclosing and beautiful words spoken to a dying robber have had the significance conjured out of them, because David in an age of less enlightenment wrote, "In death there is *no remembrance* of Thee" (Ps. vi. 5 v.).

St. Peter's glorious assertion that a merciful Saviour preached His Gospel to poor lost sinners in the World Beyond (*see* 1 Peter iii. 18–20 v.; and iv. 6 v.), has been, forsooth, absolutely and angrily denied, because in a far-away age Solomon wrote, "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccles. xi. 3 v.).

Now, without discussing the point as to whether Solomon in this passage was referring to man's

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future Life at all—and I certainly think he was not—it can be seen at a glance that there is, undoubtedly, a radical and vital distinction between the conceptions and utterances of Bible writers who lived before Christ and of those who were contemporary with Him. To which class of utterance, we ask, are we to attach the greater importance and authority? Are we to place first the words of Him who was "the Truth" and of those who were taught by Him, or the words of those who knew less than He and they did, because the "Light" had not come? Surely there can be no hesitation in giving an answer. If we acknowledge Christ as the great Revealer of Truth, if we believe that it was *He* who lifted the veil that shrouded man's future, then there can be no question as to how the matter stands. The two classes of Biblical writers were not on the same level, and the words of Christ, and of the men directly instructed by Him, must be placed before the pronouncements of all others. We must read the Old Testament in the bright shining of the New, and not (as has so often been done) read the New Testament in the glimmer of the Old.

So then, if the statements of the men of the twilight fall short of, or do not harmonise with, the words of the Saviour and those whom He taught—

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what of it? We shall not be perplexed, not even surprised, and most certainly we shall not dream of rearing an edifice of doctrine on so poor a foundation as their partial and imperfect knowledge. We shall not forget that the Almighty's law (as far as man has ever been able to observe it) is the same in regard to the impartation of spiritual knowledge as of all other knowledge accessible to us: first an unworthy, very often erroneous, idea of the truth; then a better, yet still a dim and indistinct, perception of it, and at length—only after stages of long and gradual enlightening—a full and comprehensive grasping of the same.

With this thought we turn to the Bible, and have a clearly defined idea of what we shall, and shall not, discover in its various parts. Thus, in the Old Testament we shall look for a statement of *elementary* truth as regards a Spiritual World, and for but little more. We shall expect to find it clearly teaching that such a World exists, and that there is a basis of truth in the universal testimony borne by all ages as to man's experience of the Superphysical; but not much more.

When the Old Testament was written, the Lord of the Spiritual—the one who holds "the Keys of Hades"—had not come on earth, and as yet the

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mists of ignorance lay thick about "the valley of the shadow of death."

In the New Testament we shall look for the rays of a brighter and more penetrating search-light turned upon the Realm of Spirit.

There is still another important consideration as regards our manner of dealing with the testimony of the Bible. It is this. If we wish to treat that testimony consistently, we must take into account, not only dogmatic and explicit statements referring to future Life, as contained in particular *texts*, but also that much greater and equally important testimony found in a great number of recorded spiritual *facts*. In so doing we shall get much nearer the truth concerning our own nature and the World into which we must pass one day, than we can ever get by ignoring the larger testimony named, and restricting ourselves to the texts.

The Bible contains the record of hundreds of interesting and wonderful super-physical facts and of spiritual experiences that have befallen mankind. In grasping the import of these a flood of strong light is flung both upon the mystery that enwraps our being, and upon a Spiritual Universe with which we are seen to be in close relationship. On the whole, this has not been adequately realised.

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A great deal of the teaching, past and current, concerning future existence exhibits a grave defect. It has been constructed only on the basis of a few scattered and detached texts, while the significance of great spiritual *facts* and *experiences*, as recorded in Scripture, has been overlooked, and not allowed to complexion the teaching.

But, surely, it must be wrong to so deal with the Bible. If we believe the Book to be a trustworthy guide to spiritual truth, we certainly ought to give our attention to *all* that it says on the subject.

Yet many have not done this. Thousands who would be horrified at the mere suggestion that they only accept a part of the Bible settle themselves to think that very little can be known about the World of Spirit. Other earnest Christians even go so far as to think that to remain in ignorance on the subject is rather an indication of high culture and intellectuality.

Both classes have failed to grasp the meaning of much that has been "written for our learning." Scriptural statements of spiritual facts and experiences are meant to be the commentaries on texts. They must be studied together. The texts will be better understood in the light of the facts.

How comes it, then, that this reasonable method

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of reading Scripture has not been universally practised?

On account of Christians having regarded the spiritual facts and experiences of the Bible, not as disclosures of *still-existing* truth, but rather as abnormal incidents that happened long ago, and that could not possibly happen *now*. They must be believed, of course, by the "orthodox" as what *has been*, but they are not to be thought of as having any kind of connection with the present age. Their position is outside the circle of practical nineteenth-century thought and idea.

That we have not misrepresented matters may be seen in the fact that churchgoers and chapelgoers smile incredulously at the suggestion of its being possible that spiritual experiences, *similar* to those recorded in Scripture, may occur to those who are living now.

I know many who would not dream of disbelieving that Moses was seen after death by three Apostles, and that persons whose physical bodies were in the grave appeared to many after the resurrection of Jesus, and that St. Paul had an intimate acquaintance with the Spirit-world before he left the earth-life (*see* 2 Cor. xii. 1–4 v.), who, at the same time, absolutely refuse to believe that any de-

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parted one has reappeared to present-day survivors. I venture to assert that the truth concerning a Spiritual Universe would be far better understood than it is were it not that many sober-minded men and women, able to bear witness that the super-physical is constantly happening, hesitate to give their testimony, lest professed Bible-believers should think them untruthful or demented. Depend upon it, if St. Paul had penned in the nineteenth instead of in the first century his experiences of the Spiritual, many who revere his writings and think they believe them would not hesitate to account him a suitable case for the lunatic asylum.

But why, we ask, should present-day spiritual experiences and after-death manifestations be considered incredible? The Spiritual World is not *less* a fact now than it was when the Old Testament was written or when Christ was on earth. The past and present are not dissociated. What has been may still be. Why, if we receive as true the Bible statements of super-physical facts that happened in the past, should we reject as antecedently false all statements of similar facts happening in the present? To whatever extent man's power of perceiving a Spiritual World may have varied at different periods of history (as it, undoubtedly, has

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done), the Spiritual World itself has always remained the same. What was true of it a thousand years ago is true of it to-day. To it the words of the Gloria may not inaptly be applied—"As it was in the beginning, is *now,* and ever shall be: world without end."

So, then, we urge that the Bible shall be treated in a sensible way. All its statements are not on the same level of revelation, and recorded facts, as well as texts, are to be taken into consideration in investigating the subject of ourselves as we stand related to a vast realm of non-physical life and activity.

Unless this be done, an imperfect idea of the truth is inevitable.

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PART II

What is Man?—The Bible's Testimony

In endeavouring to ascertain the answer of Scripture to the question, "What will become of us when we die?" common sense suggests that we should start the inquiry by asking what the Bible has disclosed as regards the *nature* and *constitution* of man. Is he physical and nothing more, or is he a combination of physical and spiritual? Does his manhood include nothing that can escape the extinguishment of death, or is there in him something that cannot be physically dissolved?

Here is a problem closely connected with our future, and I think it impossible to adequately conceive of what we shall be, until we have distinctly grasped the idea of what we are.

"What is man?" asked David long ago, and from that time all the thinkers of the ages have been trying to answer the Psalmist's question aright. Let us see what the Bible has to say on this preliminary point.

Now, St. Paul's definition of man as "spirit, soul

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and body" (2 Thess. v. 23 v.), is commonly accepted by Christians as the correct one. And correct it undoubtedly is, if the terms used by the Apostle be made to cover the *whole* truth concerning our being and constitution in a way that will harmonise with *facts* recorded in Scripture, and with super-physical experiences that mankind has had before and since the epochs referred to by the Bible.

But, unfortunately, the whole truth as to our being has by no means always been brought out by writers who have dealt with the subject. Sometimes a very great deal of that truth has not even been hinted at, and hundreds of pious authors seem not to have had the faintest idea of a fact concerning man's interior being, which is clearly disclosed by Scripture.

Take an all-important case in point, viz, man's possession of a *Spirit-body*, which is encased, during the earth-life, within his physical body. The existence of such a body (as we shall show later) is plainly taught by Scripture.

We contend, therefore, that no explanation of St. Paul's terms can possibly be satisfactory that does not cover that fact, unless we are prepared to think that the Apostle denied or suppressed a great

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elementary truth recognised and taught by Christ and St. Paul's contemporaries.

Again, we often find that a writer starts with the acceptance of this three-fold description, and ends by practically treating man as if he were only two-fold. After having read the book of such a writer, how often has the only impression left upon one's mind been that man is a material body plus a shapeless and mysterious something, which latter may be named "Spirit" or "Soul," as we please.

But depend upon it that St. Paul, in so close connection with the great Truth-Revealer, and also himself having had so unique an experience of the Spiritual World, had more than this in his mind when he penned the words, "spirit, soul and body." He never intended that "spirit" and "soul" should be interchangeable terms.

Further, let me say that I do not think we shall obtain the Bible's answer to "What is man?" by any amount of acquaintance with the learned and subtle expositions of the terms to which we are referring. Thousands of volumes have been written on the subject, but few of them have contributed much to anything like a solution of the problem of being. Those of the most scholarly writers bewilder the reader rather than explain the matter

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to him. I remember once hearing of a devout old woman, to whom a copy of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, with elaborate notes, had been given. When she was afterwards asked if she had *understood* the book, her reply was, "Oh, yes, I understand the book well enough, and one day, by the grace of God, I hope to understand the *notes*."

I am inclined to think that many are in the position of that old woman. It is far easier to understand the truth about ourselves *from the Bible alone* than it is to gather it from the expositions of the commentators.

These expositions, no doubt, have their value, in spite of their tendency to enwrap the subject in obscurity. They confirm us in the belief that *something* belonging to us survives the incident of dying; but they hardly do more. If they conduct us to a point already reached by thousands who never read theological essays, most of them take us no further. They contribute very little to any *definite* idea of what we shall be when the material part of us shall "return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it."

In a word, the usual dissertations on "spirit" and "soul" have too much the character of abstraction ever to be instructive to the great mass of the Chris-

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tian laity. What we are all seeking is not an abstract, but a *concrete* idea of ourselves in our complexity of being. Is this concrete idea obtainable? I think it is if we grasp the import of certain superphysical facts recorded "for our learning" in the Bible, and remember, moreover, that those facts are not peculiar to one age, but have pertained to all ages.

On the other hand, I do not think any concrete idea of ourselves is possible if those facts and their import be ignored.

My task, therefore, is a comparatively simple one. It is to try and show what man is, in the light of the facts of the Scripture, apart from any abstruse definition of the terms "spirit" and "soul." If I use these words (and it is all but impossible not to use them in connection with this subject), it will be for convenience sake.

I believe that the Bible's disclosures concerning our nature may be understood better without, than with, the technicalities of the schools. The gold of Divine truth may lie nearer the surface of the written Word than many may have supposed.

I.—Man is more than a Physical Being.

Foremost among the truths gathered from the

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Bible as to man's nature is, that he is more than he appears to the material senses to be. He seems no more than a higher class of physical being, who shares with other earthly creatures a common physical life. Those in whom the faculty that perceives the Spiritual lies dormant, look at him and see no vital distinction between him and the brute, insect and plant. The circumstance of death seems to make them alike. What befalls them also befalls him. Physically he and they appear to perish. To whatever ends, in the economy of Nature, the dead and disintegrated particles of their material organisation may subsequently serve, it looks as if death obliterates their individuality. The man, the brute, the insect and the plant, *as such*, seem to end their existence when death comes. But the Bible affirms that in the case of man (at all events) death does not entail non-existence. It declares that his being *as a man* is not terminated nor even suspended when physical life has departed and the material body is laid in the grave to decay.

For example, Scripture shows that two men, Samuel and Moses, did not lose their personality, although their bodies had been consigned to the dust. The *men* themselves were alive after death. It shows, in Christ's parable of the Rich Man and

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Lazarus, that those two individuals were still existent, although their bodies had died.

It also shows, in the words of Jesus spoken to a dying man, that the extinguishment of His own and the robber's physical lives would be no obstacle to their being together in Paradise on the day of crucifixion.

But does not all this presuppose that man is more than material? If he were not so, how absurd of the Bible to introduce him on the stage of *life* after the death of the material.

Then, again, the Bible represents that the extinguishment of physical life does not involve the extinguishment of *mind*.

Samuel, Moses, Dives, Lazarus, our Lord and the robber, are not depicted as mindless entities after death, but as beings who can *think*. Samuel, Moses and Dives are made to speak. Speaking implies the action of mind. Christ and the robber were to know one another. Recognition is also an exercise of mind.

I have no intention of complicating our subject by an abstruse consideration of what mind is. One thing is very clear. If the pronouncements of the Bible be right, mind cannot be classed as physical. That book emphatically negatives the theory of the

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Materialist, viz, that mind is no more than the outcome of certain combinations of material particles, as water is the outcome of a combination of hydrogen and oxygen.

If mind were no more than a resultant of material combination, how comes it that Scripture represents it as surviving death? How could it survive a physical dissolution that would destroy the combinations under which it is alleged to exist? Mind may be, and probably is, the outcome of combination; but of combination that is spiritual and not physical. Hence we see that the statements of the Bible concerning man cannot be adjusted with the theory of those who account him only a physical being.

II.—Man, after Death, is in Bodily Form.

We advance a stage in our inquiry, and further gather from Scripture, that man after death while preserving his personality and mind, is in *bodily form.*

This will appear a startling statement to many excellent Christians who only think of a spirit as a shapeless essence—a vague something without body or parts. It would be interesting to trace the source whence the popular idea of a spirit has been derived.

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For some insufficient reason, many have come to the conclusion that the word "body" can only be applied to creatures that possess a *physical* organisation, *i. e.*, to creatures living on the earth-plane, or on planets more or less resembling our own. It never seems to strike some persons that it is possible there may exist bodies other than those compounded of material particles.

They can, of course, conceive of man as in bodily form, while as yet encased in a "tabernacle" of flesh. Very likely they have a dim idea of him as he will be on a distant resurrection day, when (according to a crude idea, but not according to St. Paul's teachings) his spirit will be a second time incarnated in a body composed of reanimated flesh that has mouldered in the grave. But it is altogether beyond their power to think of him as in bodily form during that period when he shall have been stripped of an earth-body, and not as yet re-clothed with a resurrection one.

To many Christians, educated and uneducated, it seems a veritable contradiction in terms to speak of a *body* in relation to a spirit. They can only imagine one kind of body, and that is laid aside at death, and the man (whatever his condition may be in the Spirit-World) is without it then.

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Hence the commonly prevailing idea of ourselves as we shall be in the Intermediate Life, is a depressingly abstract one. The Ego that survives the incident of dying is enveloped in a haze of indefiniteness. I do not think I am exaggerating when I state that not one in every ten persons who believe in a Life Beyond has any idea of departed ones other than as formless conscious essences, who are doomed to await the resurrection of their cast-off physical organization before they can reassert their claim to be called "men" and "women."

We challenge the accuracy of the idea that bodily form cannot be a characteristic of spirit. Whence came it? Was it borrowed from philosophy and foisted into Christian teaching, as other philosophical notions have been? Very likely it was so. After the Apostolic times, the Church showed a ready disposition to coquet with the schools.

One thing is very certain, the idea was not borrowed from the Bible. In that Book we learn that bodily form is not restricted to earthly matter.

St. Paul mentions "celestial bodies" as well as "bodies terrestrial," and a "spiritual body" as distinct from a "natural body" (1 Cor. xv. 40 and 44 v.).

Moreover, scores and scores of spiritual appear-

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ances are recorded in Scripture. Angels have visited and conversed with men. In all these instances, the spiritual beings have been in bodily shape. Thus, if the testimony of the Bible be reliable, the super-physical is not formless.

Now, it is very curious that persons who find no difficulty in believing that one class of spirits (angels) has bodily form, experience a very great difficulty in thinking of another spiritual class (men after death) as possessing it. The poet who clothes his super-physical creations with beautiful shape, is not generally regarded by religious folk as contributing very much to our knowledge of the Spiritual. He is not credited with being, in any sense, a teacher of actual fact. His pretty conceptions are admired, they appeal to æsthetic taste; but at the same time they take too concrete a form ever to be factors of practical thought to the lovers of theological abstraction. The higher world of spirit-form and reality, to which the mind of the poet soars, is not the World Beyond of the average Christian. It is not sufficiently vague and shadowy to fit in with the "beatific *visions*" of ordinary theology. When the departed mother is represented in the Spirit-World, as enfolding in her embrace "the child of her affection," how many con-

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sider that statement as anything more than a touching figure of speech? To many the "enfolding" and the "embrace" mean no more than an attraction of bodiless essences to one another.

And yet the poet is right, and his idea of spirit life is better and truer than the divine's. It is more definite and Biblical. To him, at all events, the super-physical is not formless. That is one reason why the works of the poet are generally held in higher estimation than those of the theologian.

The former is a *Seer* in a sense that the latter is not.

But it may be said—suppose it be granted that *angels* possess bodily shape and organisation—does the Bible clearly teach that man possesses it after Death, has divested him of his material part, and ushered him into a World of Spirit?

We answer—yes. Scripture has drawn aside the thin veil that hangs between life here and Beyond. We have been given a view of man in his experience after death, and the being disclosed is not a shapeless essence, but a creature of organised form. He is *bodily* still. Already we have referred to two *post-mortem* appearances—those of Samuel and Moses.

The prophet seen after death by the woman of

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Endor, and with whom the unhappy Saul conversed, was in bodily form. The woman's answer to the King's question—"What *form* is he of?"—was, "An old *man* cometh up" (1 Sam. xxviii. 14 v.).

The Moses, seen on the mount of Transfiguration, fifteen hundred years after his material body had been buried "in a valley in the land of Moab" (Deut. xxxiv. 6 v.) was not shapeless.

St. Luke describes him as a *man* (Luke ix. 30 v.), and so bodily was he that he could converse with Christ, and was recognisable.

Again, take our Lord's portrayal of two persons after they had died, the Rich Man and Lazarus. It is consistent with the view that they were beings of shape, but altogether inconsistent with the idea of their being mere bodiless essences. The beggar who was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom (Paradise) was not an effluence of the man, as gas or smoke is an effluence of coal. It was his spirit-body that was conveyed thither, which as yet had not awakened from the temporary unconsciousness that attends the separation of the interior spiritual form from its physical envelope. The Rich Man, too, in Hades, could see and hear, and speak, and feel, all of which capabilities presuppose faculties, and, consequently, form.

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Further, there are those truth-revealing words spoken by our Lord to the dying robber. Surely they point to bodily shape in Paradise. The two were to be together, which implies recognition. Could the robber have recognised Christ had the latter been formless and borne no resemblance to the Being Who expired on the cross?

Consider, moreover, that glorious statement of St. Peter, which reveals such infinite possibilities in regard to the exercise of Divine mercy. I suppose more artifice and word-jugglery has been brought to bear upon this passage, in order to explain away its natural sense, than upon any other passage in the Bible. St. Peter, be it remembered, was one of the privileged three who saw departed Moses on the mountain of Transfiguration, and in 1 Peter iii. 18–20 v., and iv. 6 v., he tells us about a work of saving grace that was performed by the Saviour during the brief interval between death on the cross and resurrection.

In the Spirit-World (into which, on Christ's own showing, He went at death), St. Peter asserts that Jesus preached "the Gospel" to persons who for their wickedness had been swept out of the earth-life by the waters of the flood, but who had, evidently, profited by God's judgment, as is seen in

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the words—"which *sometime*" (not then) "were disobedient."

The Apostle also declares the object of Christ's preaching to them, viz, that they might "live *according to God* in the spirit," *i. e.*, the spirit-life.

Now, we would ask, do not the acts of preaching and listening presuppose faculties of speech and hearing, and do not those faculties in turn point to an organised body of some sort? Can we, in our wildest flights of imagination, picture a formless Christ preaching to a congregation of formless essences?

Perhaps, we may be told that the word "preaching" must not be taken literally, but in a metaphorical sense, *i. e.*, to denote merely a mental operation in which neither voice nor ears play any part. If so, are we prepared to apply this principle of interpretation to the statement made by the same Apostle (in the Gospel—that according to St. Mark—written under his direction) that he *saw* and *heard* Moses talking with Christ on the mount? (Mark ix. 4 and 5 v.). Are we ready to argue that in one place he meant what he stated, and in another place did not? We contend that St. Peter's statement as to Christ's preaching to "the spirits in keeping," is as much a *fact* as that He preached in

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the Temple-courts, and in the streets and highways of Galilee.

We need only notice the testimony of one other sacred writer in regard to the point we are considering. It is that of St. John, another of those who saw Moses after death. In Rev. vi. 9–11 v., he describes his seeing the souls of the martyrs of the Christian faith "under the altar." The phrase is a Jewish one, and denotes "Paradise." How does St. John represent these servants of the Lord, who were waiting in the Spirit-World for the consummation of redemption? As bodiless entities? Certainly not: he had learned the grand lesson of the mount of Transfiguration too well for that. These human spirits had *voices* by which they could cry out, and *bodies* to which white robes could be given.

Thus, in the face of the testimony adduced, we assert that Scripture teaches that man after death is in bodily form, and we account the prevailing idea that a spirit possesses no body nor parts, because without material flesh and bones, to be a philosophical notion having no basis in fact. Apart from the Bible, the notion has been proved to be wrong by the spiritual experiences of mankind.

From these experiences, as well as from the Bible,

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the world is slowly learning many grand truths which some, by reason of "the tradition of the elders," and of "philosophy falsely so called," have failed in the past to learn.

III.—Man, while in the earth-life, possesses certain faculties that point to an interior spiritual organisation.

Thus far we have seen that the Bible discloses not only that man is more than physical in his constitution, but also that he retains after death a bodily form. We have now to see what explanation can be given of this *post-mortem* retention of form. So many regard a person as no more than a material body plus an unorganised Something—viz, a soul, considered to be an intangible essence—that it is extremely difficult for them to picture anyone, after the material body has been laid aside, as still remaining a creature of shape. The old philosophical notion is held that the part of a man that survives physical dissolution is an unorganised existence, and, therefore, (despite the statements of the Bible), possesses no parts nor shape.

Depend upon it, the vagueness that enwraps theological teaching will not be lifted, nor will our ideas of man as he is after death become clear, until once

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and for all we have got rid of that old philosophical notion: As long as we regard the centre of our being as an abstraction instead of a concrete entity, so long will Death, that strips us of our material encasement, seem to rob us of all that can constitute personality. An individuality apart from form is unthinkable; and, consequently, by thousands who profess Christianity, the dear ones snatched by Death are practically viewed as non-existent. Their survivors weep about them, cherish their memories and in orthodox fashion speak of them as in Heaven, but all the time the departed are really thought of as if lying beneath the grass of the churchyard. Why is this? Have these mourners no belief in a spirit that cannot be harmed by the Destroyer that breaks up the casket in which it had dwelt? Oh, no! that is not the reason why the departed are dropped out of the prayers, spoken of in the past tense, and generally viewed and treated as being outside the circle of life. They believe in a surviving spirit, but that spirit to them is no more than an abstract principle; vague and unreal when detached from the flesh. I venture to assert that the Christianity taught in thousands of pulpits fails in removing "the sting of death," not because the existence of a soul and a Life Beyond are denied, but in consequence of a

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non-realisation of the truth concerning man's interior spiritual part. Many have yet to learn that no human spirit exists apart from shape and organisation, whether it be on the plane of the physical or on that of the Spiritual.

But it may be asked—how is it possible for a man to be manifested in shape, after his physical organisation has been placed in the grave? Is the surviving entity—his spirit—re-clothed with another envelope in the place of the one laid aside? Is another body, spiritual in its composition, super-added to the bodiless essence, whereby physical dissolution brings him into possession of something that he had not previously had? Or, does he, in dying, only take with him that which he had all along possessed?

An illustration in point will help the reader to see what we mean. Take the case of Moses. According to the testimony of three Evangelists, he appeared in bodily form as a man on the mountain of Transfiguration. In what way do we account for that? His physical body had died, and been buried, fifteen hundred years before. Had it been resurrected and glorified for this solemn occasion? Some explain the fact thus. If they be right, then St. Paul was wrong, since Moses, not *Christ*, would

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be "the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20 v.).

Had the spirit of Moses, then, when it left its "earthly tabernacle," received a *super-addition* in the shape of a recognisable spiritual organisation that could both speak and hear? We think not. There is not so much as a hint in the Sacred Volume to warrant such a supposition. We think that Moses, when seen by Peter, James and John, was possessed of no more than he had taken with him, when at death he had stepped from the sphere of the material into that of the Spiritual.

That body in which he appeared on the Mount was not a body that he had not possessed in the earth-life. His long sojourn in the Spiritual World had, doubtless, developed and beautified it, but he had had it long before he entered that World. The coarser external body of flesh, beneath which it had once lain, had but concealed it from physical sight. Spiritual in its composition, and of a higher organisation than matter is capable of receiving, it was still beyond the range of physical vision, even when stripped of its earthly wrapper. The disciples on that Mountain saw Moses, not with their physical eyes, but with a vision pertaining to an interior body possessed by them, which in nature and con-

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stitution was similar to the body they beheld. Just as an angel had stationed himself in the pathway of Balaam, and had been unseen, until the eyes of the prophet's interior body had been opened, so Moses and Elias would have been unseen by those disciples except for a like opening. The Universe of Spirit lies closed to the merely physical.

It will be asked—upon what do you base the assertion that man possesses this interior body? We answer—upon *facts* disclosed in the Bible and supported by the concurrent testimony coming to us from outside the area of Biblical history, *i. e.*, from the universal experiences of mankind.

The Bible bears witness that men, while still in the earth-life, possess certain *faculties* that point to the existence of an interior spiritual organisation.

Let us substantiate this statement.

It will be admitted by everyone, until he gets into the domain of ordinary theological thought and doctrine, that the fact of any *faculty* existing presupposes an organisation, and, moreover, some kind of body and shape. We have no experience, nor can we form any conception, of a faculty unconnected with a body, which is an organised thing. When we think about the faculties of sight, speech, hearing and smell, we involuntarily associate them with

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the eyes, the vocal organs, the ears and the nose ; or, at all events, with organs that stand in the stead of them. Were one to assert that an eyeless, throatless, earless and noseless creature was, nevertheless, able to see, speak, hear and smell, his statement would be treated as absurd. Were he to go further and say that a being not having even so much as a body and shape could yet exercise all the faculties named, sane persons would account him mad.

And yet this is precisely the statement that has been made by the greater number of Christian teachers all through the centuries. Nor am I exaggerating. I have standard books in my library, whose teaching may be summarised in some such way as follows : Man is two-fold in his nature ; he has an organised physical body, and an unorganised spirit, or soul. When he dies he leaves his body and all organisation behind him, and goes to Heaven without either the one or the other. There, bodiless and unorganised, he, nevertheless, sees beautiful sights, listens to enchanting music and sings Alleluias.

But suppose the thinker should ask the awkward question—how can this be? How can a creature devoid of organised parts and a body exercise faculties and perform functions that require

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organisation and bodily form? In what way shall we answer that fair and sensible question? Shall we—as has often been done—thrust the question aside, as being one of those things that can never be known this side of the grave, and concerning which it is rather wicked for us to inquire? If we do this, depend upon it, we shall justify the position of many intellectual ones who label the current ideas of a life after death as unreasonable. Or, shall we—just a little impatient, perhaps, with so-called "orthodoxy"—turn from the unsatisfactory text-books of Church and Chapel, to the Bible, the Book that both revere, in order to gather from it a better and clearer explanation of what we rightly wish to know?

Surely there can be no doubt as to the course a Christian should adopt. If the Bible be really a revelation concerning man's nature and destiny, how marvellous, were it altogether silent on a subject so important!

Now when we turn to the pages of Scripture, one of the first things that strikes us is, how large a number of persons are introduced into the sacred narrative, who are shown to be in the possession of faculties of such a character that in the exercise of them the bounds and possibilities of the physical are surpassed.

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Patriarchs, seers, prophets and others are represented as seeing and hearing sights and sounds, external to themselves, not only invisible and inaudible to other men, but also absolutely beyond the range of physical organs.

For this reason we claim to be consistent in applying the term "*super-physical*" to these extraordinary faculties. But before we consider these faculties more particularly, there are two points in regard to the Bible's reference to them that should not be overlooked.

One is, that the Bible mentions them, not as if they were abnormal manifestations of mysterious and superhuman powers meant to astonish the reader, but rather as if they were, if not common, at all events well-known experiences of mankind. The sacred writers tell their story without drawing any sharp line of demarcation between the natural and what we in our ignorance call the "supernatural." They tell us of men possessing superphysical faculties, in just as sober and matter-of-fact a way as they describe any commonplace circumstances affecting them. For example, no hint is given that anything marvellous had happened because Abraham, Jacob, Daniel, Zacharias, St. Peter and many others saw beings from the Spirit-World,

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or that the boy Samuel, the prophets, Saul of Tarsus and St. John the Divine heard voices that were not earthly. The writers make no more of a person encountering a spiritual being, and of hearing him speak, than they do of anyone meeting an ordinary stranger in the highways of Palestine and conversing with him.

The fact is suggestive, and it is not difficult to explain it. The Bible writers realised, as too many Bible readers do not, that the physical and super-physical meet in man, and both are *natural.* When shall we learn to extend the horizon of our thought, and cease to restrict "nature" to our own little miserable circle of experience! When shall we fling away as a human impertinence the word "*super-natural!*" Not, I think, until we have grasped a great truth realised by the writers of Scripture—that there are things in Heaven and earth that are super-physical, but nothing in the universe of God that is supernatural.

We spoke of another point to be noticed. It is this. The Bible distinctly asserts that what was seen and heard by men through the mediumship of their super-physical faculties had *a real and objective existence;* that is to say, the sights and sounds were *external* to the seers and

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hearers themselves. This is a very important point.

There are many who think that science requires them to explain away all the super-physical facts recorded in the Bible, and outside that Book, too, on the hypothesis that they are no more than *subjective* experiences. They are said to exist only in the minds of the seers and hearers. Thus we are to understand, not that Samuel really heard a Voice calling his name, but thought he did so. That Abraham, Balaam and others did not actually see angels, nor did the three disciples on the Mount see Moses, but that they had the idea they did. Neither the Voice, the angel, nor Moses, was an audible or visible reality; but only an impression. Our reply to this is—that this theory is not countenanced by the Bible. There is not a shadow of a hint in that Book that men's super-physical experiences had no basis in external fact. On the contrary, what was seen and heard are declared to be objective realities, and are afterwards, again and again, referred to as such.

The Voice to Samuel is given as a fact, as much so as is the voice of Eli who questioned the lad. The angels who met Balaam, stood beside Zacharias, and led St. Peter from his prison, are made by

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Scripture no less real objects than the prophet's ass, the priest's altar, and the apostle's chains.

Let us look, now, at the testimony borne by the Bible to the existence in us of those faculties already described as extra-ordinary and super-physical.

And in doing this, let it not be forgotten that our belief in the existence of those faculties rests not simply on the statements of the Bible.

We might put aside that Book, and yet there would remain an overwhelming mass of testimony that the super-physical exists in man. First, we have the witness of men and women of all the past centuries that it does. Next, we have an accumulation of the personal experience of thousands now living, who either themselves possess those powers, or have seen others in possession of them.

Emphatic as is the testimony of Scripture on this point, it must be remembered that it is only a very small fragment of the testimony that has been borne.

Many of the super-physical experiences recorded in the Bible have their counterpart in what is happening to-day.

Thus, the statements of the Bible on this subject are credible, if for no other reason, because they

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agree with a mass of absolutely independent testimony, as well as with present experiences that we can verify.

I lay stress upon this, for the reason that many Christians who would be intensely shocked at being charged with not believing their Bible, appear not to have the slightest notion that these super-physical faculties exist. They acknowledge that man has a spirit encased until death in an earthly body, and think that spirit, when freed from the physical, will exhibit marvellous powers, including spiritual sight, hearing and speech. But they fail to perceive that these powers—however rudimentary and undeveloped at present—are inherent in the spirit of a man, all the while that that spirit is incarnated in the physical. In spite of the frowns of science and common sense, such persons experience no difficulty in thinking that spiritual organs, not existent before death, can, within two or three minutes, at death be brought into a condition of wonderful perfection and exercise.

They do not understand that the organs of our spirit-body exist *before* our spirit is transferred from the plane of matter to that of spirit, in the same way as the physical organs of a babe exist before the circumstance of birth. Neither death, in the

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one case, nor birth, in the other, calls the organs into being. They existed before; death and birth but open up for them two wider fields of exercise.

Now, suppose you tell a person of the class mentioned, of any well-authenticated case of one living in London being able to see and hear that which is inappreciable to physical eyes and ears. How will he receive your communication? Will he not shake his head, and, more than likely, tell you he is far too strong-minded to believe in such nonsense? Will he not exhaust his ingenuity in devising all kinds of hypotheses, except the right one, to account for the matter? Falsehood, hallucination, disordered stomach, or pious imagination, are good enough explanations for him. I have only one word to say to Christians of this type. In labelling as incredible the testimony that men and women of the present day possess super-physical faculties, are they conscious that they practically convict the Bible of falsehood?

It states that those faculties were possessed by many living in the times at which that Book was written. They profess to believe that fact, but resort to any theory to explain away the twin-fact that persons of the present age possess those powers. But why this inconsistency? Why believe

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the one, and refuse to believe the other? Man's constitution has undergone no change. What was possible to him once is possible to him now. The church or chapel goer, who thinks it incredible that a person whose interior faculties are open should see a spiritual being, or hear a spirit voice, ought not to believe that Abraham, Samuel, the prophets and others had those same experiences.

Let them be consistent. If the super-physical does not exist in man now, then there are no grounds for believing it existed in him in the far-away Bible-times, since he was not constituted then differently from what he is at present.

If, on the other hand, they can bring themselves to acknowledge that it does exist now (and the proof of that is overwhelming to anyone sufficiently freed from conventionality and prejudice to inquire), then they will be in a better position to refute the disquieting accusation that the old Book is altogether outside the limits of modern thought and experience, and the Bible will fling for them an unsuspected light upon the wonder of human existence.

The Bible bears very clear testimony that man, while still an inhabitant of earth, possesses, at least, two wonderful super-physical faculties. It shows him as capable of *seeing* and *hearing* realities exter-

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nal to himself, which are invisible and inaudible to those who are only seeing with the physical eyes, and hearing with the physical ears.

These interior faculties to which we allude are known as *Clairvoyance* and *Clairaudience.*

The terms denote clear or refined sight and hearing. The clairvoyant sees, and the clairaudient hears that which those in whom those powers are undeveloped, or (to speak more correctly) unopened, do not see and hear. The phrase "Second-sight" is often used as a synonym for "Clairvoyance." Few who use it, however, have any adequate notion of what it implies. Many take it to mean no more than an abnormal development of *physical* vision.

It is easy to show that the facts of clairvoyance are such as to extend beyond the possibilities of the physical. We contend, therefore, that the phrase "second-sight," is improperly defined unless it be made to connote the existence of an organ of vision other than the material eye.

There are three phases of clairvoyant and clairaudient manifestation that go to show that these faculties in man cannot be classed as physical.

(A). Some clairvoyant and clairaudient persons can see and hear external spiritual realities that are

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near to them, in spite of those realities being imperceptible to the physical senses.

(B). Others can see and hear spiritual realities that are *distant* so far as to be absolutely beyond the range of material sight and hearing.

(C). Some, again, can clairvoyantly see and clairaudiently hear external *physical* realities, under such circumstances of time and distance as to make it impossible that physical eyes and ears can be the media of the sight and hearing.

It will be interesting to note the testimony of the Bible on these points.

One or two instances of each of these phases of manifestation must suffice. The reader, when once started on the right track of thought, will see that the whole Book is one long record of man's clairvoyant and clairaudient power.

Take, under the first phase, instances of *Clairvoyance*, by which *near* spiritual realities, although invisible to the physical organs, are seen. Balaam is riding along a highway on his ass, attended by two servants, when an angel confronts him to bar his progress. The prophet and his attendants do not see him. The physical eyes of the three men are wide open, and yet are unable to perceive a spiritual being who stands before them. Even the prophet's

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ass has a consciousness of the nearness of the superphysical (as animals frequently have), but the men have no such consciousness, until the clairvoyant faculty of one of them is quickened into operation. "Then" (says the Bible) "the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way" (Num. xxii. 31 v.). Which eyes were opened? we ask. Surely, some other than those of his external body, since the latter had been open all the while, and were powerless to see the spiritual, although it was so close.

Elisha, in consequence of his clairaudient power (*see* 2 Kings vi. 12 v.), had incurred the hatred of the King of Syria, and that monarch had sent out a great host to effect his capture. The prophet's servant is full of fear that his master's life is endangered. He has seen the army that encompasses the city. Elisha is strangely calm in the face of his peril. He sees what as yet the servant does not see. "Lord, open his eyes" (he prays) "that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw; and, behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings vi. 17 v.). Again we ask—which eyes were opened? Not the physical eyes of the young man, for they were already open, or he would not have seen the

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Syrian host; but the eyes of an interior organisation that enabled him to see what his master had already seen—a manifestation of spiritual reality close at hand.

We have likewise the testimony of the Bible as to *Clairaudience*, under this particular phase of manifestation.

The boy Samuel and the aged Eli have laid themselves down to rest in the chambers of the Temple-courts, when a voice from the Spiritual World calls the boy. The old man does not hear it, in spite of his being so near the boy that the latter thinks it is he who has spoken.

It is Samuel's first experience in clairaudience. He "did not yet know the Lord, neither was *the word of the Lord* yet revealed unto him" (1 Sam. iii. 7 v.). Eli knows what the boy does not. His past experience in the super-physical had taught him that a near reality, inaudible to the ears of flesh, could be heard by the ears of a finer interior organisation. "He perceived that the Lord had called the child" (Verse 8). Within the precincts of a later temple, Christ is one day standing, surrounded by a crowd of people. Before them He has offered a prayer, and the answer to it comes as an articulate message from the realm of the Spiritual. Christ

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hears it, as, undoubtedly, does the evangelist who alone records the words spoken by that voice. But the bystanders do not. To them no words are distinguishable. Their clairaudient faculties are partially open, but only partially. "The people . . . said that it thundered; others said—an angel spake to him" (John xii. 29 v.).

Saul of Tarsus is journeying to Damascus, when a manifestation from the Spiritual World converts the fiery persecutor of Christianity into its foremost and devoted apostle. Speaking afterwards of that experience, in his defence before a Jewish mob howling for his blood, St. Paul said, "They that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but *they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me*" (Acts xxii. 9 v.). Why this inability to hear? Because, unlike the Apostle, they were not clairaudient.

We turn again to the Bible for instances of another phase of clairvoyant and clairaudient power, whereby *distant* spiritual realities are seen and heard.

Not all who are clairvoyant and clairaudient as regards near spiritual realities are so as regards distant ones.

First, with respect to *Clairvoyance.*

Isaiah, the prophet, while his interior spirit-body

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is still encased in flesh, sees "the Lord *sitting upon his throne* high and lifted up" (Isaiah vi. 1 v.).

Ezekiel, under the same conditions, by the river of Chebar, sees the *heavens* opened and has visions of God (Ez. i. 1 v.).

Daniel and others of Old Testament times have like experiences, and the point to be noticed is this, that the objects seen by these *seers* are not near objects. In this respect they are unlike the manifestation of angels and Samuel and Moses after death, who were clairvoyantly seen as close beside the seers.

There is a notable instance in the New Testament of the particular phase of clairvoyance with which we are dealing.

Stephen, the first Christian martyr, has just finished his address to a fanatical mob that is about to stone him to death, and says, "I see *the heavens* opened and the Son of man *standing on the right hand of God*" (Acts. vii. 56 v.).

In this case also the spiritual objects seen are distant ones. The Christ at His ascension had passed out of the sphere of the physical, and, even in that sphere, our physical vision is very, very limited.

Had Peter, James and John been standing beside

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St. Stephen at his martyrdom, it is probable that their clairvoyant eyes, that saw Moses on the mount of Transfiguration, would not have seen the heaven and the Christ that the martyr saw.

His was a higher phase of clairvoyance than theirs.

The Bible also bears witness to *clairaudient* powers in man that come under this second and higher phase of development.

Abraham is passing through a mysterious and terrible trial of his faith in God, when an angel calls unto him *out of heaven* (Gen. xxii. 11 v.). It is significant that the assertion is repeated in the 15th verse—"The angel of the Lord called unto Abraham *out of heaven* the second time."

We affix no rigid definition to the term "heaven" as here employed, but we do contend that it points to a spiritual manifestation that was *distant* from the patriarch. Jesus (and remember that He, although the Son of God, was truly *man*) hears at his baptism "a Voice *from heaven*, saying, This is my beloved Son" (John iii. 17 v.). Peter, James and John, in presence of the transfigured Saviour and the departed lawgiver and Elijah, hear the same Voice which bids them "Hear ye Him" (Matt. xvii. 5 v.).

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St. Paul—whether in the body or out of it he cannot tell, but certainly while his physical body was still alive on earth—sees Paradise and hears from there unspeakable words untranslatable into mundane language (2 Cor. xii. 2–4 v.).

St. John, the aged exile among the convicts of Patmos, sees "under the altar" (a Hebrew phrase for "Paradise") those who have been slain for the Word of God, and hears them cry with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true?" (Rev. vi. 10 v.).

It remains for us to notice the Biblical testimony as to the third phase of clairvoyant and clairaudient power, viz, that by which external *physical* realities are seen and heard under such circumstances of time and distance as to make it impossible that physical eyes and ears can be the media of the sight and hearing.

First, as regards *Clairvoyance.*

Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, prompted by avarice, has obtained a costly gift from Naaman, and, convinced that it is impossible that his master can have seen the transaction, presents himself before him in all the unblushing effrontery of assumed innocence. But Elisha is a *seer*, and his clairvoyant power has enabled him to know of his servant's

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rapacity apart from the mediumship of physical sight. Clairvoyantly he has witnessed the details of the meeting of Gehazi and Naaman. "Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?" (2 Kings v. 26 v.).

Philip has found Nathanael and brought him from a distance to see the Christ. Jesus has already clairvoyantly seen the devout Israelite, although they have not previously met. "Before that Philip called thee, *when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*" The man is astonished. Here is the exercise of a power that he thinks resides only in God. Jesus has seen him, although space presents a barrier to physical sight.

"Rabbi" (he exclaims), "thou art the Son of God."

The Saviour, who knows what is in man, gently sets aside the reasoning as inconclusive. Clairvoyant power in a human being is no proof of Divinity; others, beside Him, possess that power. "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee *under the fig tree,* believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John i. 45–51 v.).

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Next, as regards *Clairaudience.*

The King of Syria is warring against Israel. Again and again he plans the disposal of his troops (unknown, as he thinks, to his adversary) in such a way as to score a military advantage over him. The King of Israel, however, does not fall into the trap. He has had a warning of his enemy's tactics and saves himself "not once or twice." Syria's monarch suspects treachery. "Will ye not shew me" (he asks of his servants), "which of us is for the King of Israel?" "None, my lord, O King" (is the answer of one of them); "but Elisha, the prophet, that is in Israel, telleth the King of Israel *the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber*" (2 Kings vi. 12 v.). The clairaudience of the man of God had frustrated the stratagem of the man of war.

Here, then, we have a few out of many instances of clairvoyance and clairaudience, as described by the Bible. Let it not be supposed, however, that the proof of man's possession of these powers rests solely on the testimony of that Book. If the Bible had been silent on the subject, it had still been impossible to deny that these powers exist; for the simple reason that there are men and women *now living* who are clairvoyant and clairaudient. None

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but those who have never investigated the subject will challenge this assertion. There is not a phase of clairvoyant and clairaudient power recorded in Scripture for which a counterpart may not be found in present-day experience. This is known to hundreds whose testimony we should accept on any other point. When we find distinguished literary and scientific men admitting the phenomena, and, at the same time frankly acknowledging that they have no hypothesis to adequately account for them, to say the least, it requires a fair amount of ignorance and assurance to calmly assign those phenomena to the region of mere fancy.

And yet, strangely enough, many good Christians, educated and uneducated, have done so.

Because they have no personal experience of these powers and know no one in possession of them; because they read their Bible and fail to perceive much that is there; and because it is so very easy to attribute everything of an extraordinary character to a disordered stomach, or an overwrought brain, they have never taken the trouble to cast upon the subject the search-light of honest and careful inquiry.

Is it not a fact that theological works, instead of being the first, are the last sources to which an

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inquirer looks for enlightenment on these great and all-suggestive truths concerning the nature of Man?

These truths are quietly ignored, and many, in consequence, betake themselves to other quarters for information that Christian teachers, did they but fully understand their text-book, would be able to furnish.

We have now seen that Scripture most clearly teaches—(*a*) that Man is more than physical; (*b*) that after death he is in bodily form; and (*c*) that while still in the earth-life he possesses certain faculties that point to an interior spiritual organisation.

Let us see further.

What may be fairly deduced from these three Propositions

We gather that as long as we remain in the earth-life we are *three-fold* in our constitution. Man is more than a popular theology has imagined him to be. He is not merely an unorganised and bodiless spirit encased in flesh. Christians, of all persons, ought to discard that theory, inasmuch as it wholly fails to account for hundreds of facts recorded in a Book they profess to accept as truth.

Man, in his essence, in the basis of his being, is a

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spirit, even when passing the first phase of existence on the plane of matter. The act of dying does not transform him into a spirit. He is that *before* he dies. This essential part of him is commonly termed "soul"; we think a better and more Scriptural term is "spirit."

But man possesses, in addition to his spirit, two bodies—a physical one and a super-physical, or spirit-body.

This spirit-body is the envelope of the spirit. The latter is resident within it, and never exists apart from it. The spirit's envelope is not a gaseous, formless entity, but a *body*. Not, indeed, a compound of gross matter, but a composition spiritual in its nature, and organised. It possesses shape as well as faculties of sight, hearing and speech, and probably other faculties. In this respect there is a correspondence between it and the coarser physical body—its earthly enwrapment. St. Paul noticed this correspondence, for he mentions "celestial *bodies* and *bodies* terrestrial" (1 Cor. xv. 40 v.).

Thus, although death deprives man of a body, it does not leave him bodiless; although it denudes him of fleshy eyes, ears and vocal organs, it does not make him sightless, deaf and dumb. There

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still remains to him another organisation through which his spirit may express itself. Samuel and Moses, after death, were able to appear in shape, and to see, hear and speak; and all who have died can do the same.

Constituted in this way, the spirit-body of a man is adapted for the plane of spirit, and only for that plane, and, consequently, it must always be at a disadvantage on the plane of matter.

But God has designed that man shall pass the first stage of his existence on this earth. It is to be his stepping-stone to a grander development of life. Thereby he is to be schooled for the Spiritual. Like the unborn babe, he possesses inherent potentialities that demand a higher sphere than the womb in which the initial phase of being is passed.

But the initial phase is necessary, and he, like the babe, must be constitutionally adjusted to the experience. And so, during the earth-life, the spirit and its spiritual envelope are encased in a physical body, as the kernel and the shell of a nut are enclosed in a husk. Man's material body stands in the same relationship to him as the husk does to the nut.

That being so, our existence, while on this earth, is a duplex one. We live in two worlds—the

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Physical and the Spiritual. By our material body, we are in conscious contact and adjustment with the physical world; while, by our spirit-body, we are consciously or unconsciously in relation to a Spiritual universe that interpenetrates the physical and us.

Further, while we are encased in flesh, the physical part of our nature predominates, in the sense that it is, more *completely* than is our spiritual part, in its own particular sphere. We can fully exercise our material faculties, but we cannot as yet fully exercise the faculties of our finer spirit-body. Nevertheless, the latter are within us, and they have been partially exercised by numbers of men and women while still in this world. The facts of Clairvoyance and Clairaudience bear witness to this.

The powers of our spirit-body will be quickened into vigour at death, because then the repressing and obscuring presence of the physical will have been removed, and the spirit part of us will have been given a freer scope, and brought into a more complete adjustment to the World of Spirit.

We submit that these are deductions that may be fairly and consistently drawn from the facts mentioned in Scripture, and they furnish a definite

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and satisfactory answer to the question "*What is Man?*"

The truth may not have been grasped by the Christian world as a whole, but that is not the fault of the Bible, but of the expositors of it. The Book itself has not left us in the dark on this most important point concerning our being.

There we read that, as earthly creatures, we are spirits enclosed in super-physical and physical bodies, and being so, are already parts of a great environing Spiritual Universe.

It only remains for us, before passing on to the next phase of this subject, to briefly notice that—

The Bible's pronouncement concerning Man's constitution is confirmed by a very general experience of mankind

A moment's reflection will lead us to see that this is a point of no small importance as affecting the truthfulness of the Bible. If there be no other grounds than its statements for the belief that man is possessed of an interior spiritual organisation, those that reject those statements have a weighty reason for doing so. They can argue—and sensibly too—that Man in his constitution is now precisely what he was two and more thousand years ago.

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Consequently, it is most unlikely, had he been really able to exercise the extraordinary powers ascribed to him by the Bible, that no traces of those powers should remain in him at the present time. Starting with the assumption that this twentieth century has no knowledge and experience of the super-physical, they may contend that there is a strong probability that those instances recorded in Scripture are less likely to be the outcome of fact than of imagination. Why credit the assertion that once upon a time Man was marvellously endowed, whereas now all signs of that endowment have wholly disappeared? Is not this to account him capable of less in the maturity of his race than in its infancy and childhood?

We consider this reasoning logical on the premiss upon which it is based, viz, that there exists no present-day knowledge and experience of the super-physical.

But we deny the premiss. We assert that there is available to every open-minded and unprejudiced inquirer a very great mass of evidence, furnished by men of all ranks and conditions from the four quarters of the globe, conclusively proving that the spiritual exists not only within man himself, but all around him.

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By every Christian this evidence should be welcomed. It stamps his text-book as the word of truth, because, in regard to its statements as to the super-physical, he can find their counterparts in present-day experience. Thereby he will be no longer obliged to resort to reservation and hyperbolism in dealing with its records.

There are tens of thousands that reverence the Bible, who, however, in spite of its assertions staring them in the face, resolutely refuse to believe in anything that can be termed "spiritualistic."

Select, as an instance, an ordinary church or chapel goer. Tell him of a well-authenticated case of someone having appeared after death, or of Mr. Jones or Mr. Smith having had a clairvoyant or clairaudient experience. He will immediately look incredulous; very likely he will be candid enough to say he does not believe in such "nonsense"; and in all probability he will inform the first acquaintance he meets that you are religiously "going to the bad," and becoming a "crank."

To a person of this type, we say, Do you know that you cannot really accept the statements of the Bible without believing in spritualism? Its pages are full of the super-physical. Why profess to be shocked at the Materialist labelling the accounts of

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the *post-mortem* appearances of Samuel and Moses as "nonsense," or worse, when you yourself do the same thing in regard to similar appearances, only because these last took place at a later date!

Why should you wax piously indignant at the mere suggestion that the old historians were not truth-tellers or fact-tellers, while you antecedently view their present-day corroborators as prevaricators or dreamers!

To those who openly say that they reject the statements of the grand old Book, we reply, Very well, then! put it aside, if you will, and in the confidence of your supposed superior knowledge ignore it; shut your eyes to its facts, treat its records as no more than the outcome of superstitious thought, the offspring of disordered brains and hysterical constitutions—but know this, that in so disposing of the Bible you will not have disposed of the facts of spiritualistic truth.

Thousands of your fellow-men and women, from all countries and of all centuries, rise up with their witness to the super-physical, that point for point corresponds with the Bible records. You must dispose of their testimony before you will have rendered a belief in the Spiritual incredible. The testimony of the Bible, valuable as it is, is after all but a

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single current in a great time-long stream of witness. There is a general experience of mankind in regard to—

(A). *Appearances after death.*

And a very widespread experience it is; far exceeding the possibility of any one person, or any number of persons, adequately estimating it.

Let anyone who doubts this assertion take the trouble to gather up the testimony that comes merely within the limit of his own knowledge. He will, probably, be astonished to discover how great is the witness borne to the fact that the departed have been seen after their earthly bodies have been placed in the grave.

Suppose we start at the comparatively very small circle of our own family and friends. There will be some in that circle who will tell of a dear one having been seen under those conditions.

A father or mother whose veracity and common sense we should not dream of doubting, calmly tells us that a deceased parent, partner or child, appeared under circumstances that make it impossible for us to put it down to a dream, or to over-strung nerves.

A friend, ordinarily so practical and unimaginative, positively asserts, in spite of our smile of incredulity,

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that a brother, thought to be alive and well at the time, was seen by him at the very hour at which (as he afterwards learned) he had died in a distant part of the world.

I could give a number of instances coming within my own small area of observation. I select only three. A highly-educated friend—a lawyer—one day said to me, "I want to tell you something, although I hardly expect you will credit it, in spite of the fact that, as a clergyman, you are supposed to believe in a Spiritual World." He then, in a most matter-of-fact way, that reminded me of the Bible-writers, informed me that since her death he had seen his wife five times, and, on two of those occasions, in broad daylight. Once she spoke to him, and advised him against a business project which, had it been carried out, would have made him a ruined man. That person was certainly sane, and I cannot think he was a liar.

Two ladies—sisters—were one summer afternoon sitting at needlework in a drawing-room in the suburbs of London. Happening to look up at the same moment, they saw, standing in the centre of the large room, a fair-haired little girl, who after a minute or more vanished. Both ladies were intensely astonished, and found that their description of what

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each had seen exactly tallied. They there and then made a note of the day and time of the appearance.

Four weeks later the mail from India came in, and brought them a letter from a sister who had married abroad and had not since been home, informing them of the sudden death of her little child, and enclosing a photograph taken a few weeks before she died. The two ladies immediately recognised the photograph as that of the child they had seen, and, moreover, the hour mentioned by the mother, as that at which the death had occurred, corresponded (after allowing for the difference between London and Indian time) with the memorandum they had made.

Two years ago, I was visiting at the bedside of a middle-aged man, who was dying of consumption in one of the infirmaries of London. On the day before that on which he passed away, at the close of a long conversation, during which I noticed his intellect seemed to be particularly bright, he said to me, "You consider, do you not, that my mind is perfectly clear?" I assured him that I had never known it to be more so. "Very well, then," he continued, "now I want to tell you what occurred last evening. But, first, you must understand that I was neither dreaming, nor under a delusion. As I lay here, my father, who died some years ago,

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stood in the place where you are now standing and spoke to me. He told me I had only a very little longer time to remain on earth, and said that he and other dear ones passed away were waiting to welcome me into the Spiritual World. I tried to raise myself in bed, in order to attract the attention of the nurse who was at the other end of the ward. I thought you might still be in the building, and I wanted her to send for you, that you, too, might see my father. I suppose the effort to raise myself must have been too much for me, for I slipped back on the pillow and felt I was fainting. When I opened my eyes again I looked for my father, but he was gone. Don't tell me I was dreaming, because I tell you with my dying breath I was not. My father was as really there as you are now, and I think he will come again."

Two days later the poor fellow had been called away. I passed the empty bed and spoke to a man in a bed close by. Without knowing what had been said to me, he described the death-scene. Just before he died, he saw him raise himself into a sitting posture, fix his gaze very earnestly on the spot where I had so often prayed and conversed with him, smile as if he were recognising someone, and then fall back on his pillow motionless. A minute

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or two afterwards the screen was put around the bed, and he knew he was gone.

I am convinced that dying man was not relating a dream, and I do not believe he was the victim of a fevered imagination.

I instance these cases as a sample of what the inquirer will gather, if he do no more than prosecute his inquiries within his own immediate circle of family and acquaintances.

But suppose we go farther afield. Suppose we try to accumulate the testimony of all those with whom we have, or may, come into personal contact. In a few weeks or months we shall have obtained enough instances of *post-mortem* manifestations to fill a book.

Go on with the investigation. Let us note all the accounts of manifestations of which we read, not in sensational novels, but in the sober-minded books and literature of the day. Our high-class magazines and periodicals abound in articles on the subject; often written by men who are distinguished for intelligence and honesty. Many of them recount their own personal experiences. Are we prepared to label their testimony as falsehood, or fiction?

But when we shall have gone so far in our inquiry, we shall not have gathered one-thousandth part of

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the testimony furnished by mankind as to after-death experiences. Thousands and thousands have gone hence, who have borne their unwritten record that the departed have been seen by them; and these, not only unknown and unlettered witnesses, but men and women whose names are remembered and venerated, distinguished in this and in past centuries for high culture and moral excellence.

Hundreds of thousands of books have been written which we can never read; other thousands, lost and forgotten, that have all declared the same great fact and experience.

How are we going to deal with this huge, this unthinkable, mass of evidence?

There are two ways. We can reject the testimony, and in so doing brand a great body of our fellow-creatures (probably including some of our own family and friends) as deceivers, prevaricators and dreamers; or we can accept the testimony, and, after having made every allowance for exaggeration on the part of some, can find in it the consentient voice of Man proclaiming that the Word of God is true.

It may be well, in passing, to notice an objection often urged against this witness of mankind. Those who have taken the least pains to inquire into the

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subject are usually the ones to urge it. The objection may be stated in some such way as follows: "We will grant that there is, and has been, from the earliest ages, a very widespread belief in appearances after death; but that is to be accounted for in much the same kind of way as we should account for children having all sorts of funny and foolish ideas. Somebody invents a story about a bogy, or Jack-the-Giant-Killer, and the child-mind believes it.

"When our race was in its infancy, somehow or another, without any basis in fact, the idea that the dead come back took hold of the mind of mankind, and ever since it has lingered there."

It is astonishing that men, claiming to be scientific, will accept this reasoning without detecting the fatal flaw in it. The answer is patent. How can you account for it, we ask, that this idea, pronounced to be childish, holds possession of the mind of man *now?* Judged by his marvellous achievements during the past fifty years, he is, surely, no longer an infant.

Then how is it he has not discarded a foolish thought that is supposed to be characteristic of infancy?

As a little boy, I had a very silly idea—I imagined the counties of Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex had

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each differently coloured soils, because they were so represented on the map. When I attained manhood that idea had completely died out in me.

If the objector be right, ought not the belief in appearances after death, on the same principle, to have died out, or, at least, to be dying out, now that Man is striding towards the maturity of civilisation and science? Should not his testimony on this point be growing less and less?

But this is not the case. In no age has he been so interested in the super-physical as in the present one; never, as now, so soberly and reasonably convinced of its reality, and so ready to bear his testimony concerning it.

One of the proofs of this is, that in this enlightened century a Society for Pyschical Research exists for investigating this particular testimony of mankind. The names of men distinguished in the circles of science, art and letters, appear on the roll of that Society—Professor Henry Sidgwick, Professor Balfour Stewart, Professor Barrett, Sir William Crookes, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, the Right Hon. Arthur J. Balfour, and a host of others.

Mr. Gladstone, in accepting an honorary membership in the Society, wrote, "It is the most important work which is being done in the world—by far the

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most important." Such men—members of the Society—as Professor Lodge, Dr. Hodgson and Frederick W. H. Myers have openly avowed their belief (as the result of psychical research), that *those whom we call dead are alive*, and can, undoubtedly, occasionally communicate with us.

I commend these facts to those who think they can dismiss an overwhelming mass of evidence regarding a Spiritual Life with a contemptuous waive of the hand, or smile of incredulity.

This would, also, seem to be the place to refer to a difficulty that many experience in accepting this testimony. It is this. Persons, after death, are said to have been seen in the form, and even in the dress, in which those who saw them had been accustomed to know them before they departed from the earth-life. Thus, the prophet Samuel appeared, in the cave of the woman of En-dor, as an old man covered with a mantle, and others since him have presented themselves invested with the characteristics of a physical body and a material garb.

How can you account for that? it is asked. Even if it be granted that Man possesses an interior spirit-body, in which after death he can manifest himself, how is it possible that he can appear in a body and dress that he laid aside in dying? It cannot be sup-

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posed that the material envelope and its dress are taken into the Spiritual World.

This was a difficulty that perplexed me for a long while, and I give the reader the explanation that was given to me by a clairvoyant and clairaudient friend who in turn received it from a departed acquaintance, who on several occasions appeared and spoke to him.

I reproduce the words as nearly as I can remember them.

"We who have left the earth-life (until we have advanced so far as to be unable to come back to the lower spheres of spirit) are very often near you whom we have left behind. But it is not always permitted to us to manifest ourselves.

"When it is permitted, we have to come in a form and appearance that you can recognise. Although, in a measure, there is a correspondence between our spirit-body and the coarser envelope that enclosed it while we were on earth, yet in many respects it is dissimilar; and were you to see us as we are, we should be unknown to you.

"This is how we establish our identity. *We think of ourselves as we know you think of us.* We mentally picture ourselves in a form and dress in which you knew us, and in so doing *we temporarily*

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clothe our spirit-body with an appearance that you see. What seem to you a physical body and a material dress are not so, but only *thought-forms*, assumed for the purpose named, and which afterwards pass away. As yet you know little about the power and possibilities of Mind; although your thoughtful men are fast advancing to a better knowledge of it. Here, in the Spiritual World, Mind is predominant, and one of its capabilities is that it can express itself *in form.*"

That this latter statement is a fact I am fully convinced; and there are good grounds for believing that we are on the eve of scientifically demonstrating it.

Bearing on the subject of this marvellous power of Mind, let me give you one pregnant sentence spoken to me. An aged working-man lately accosted me as I was leaving my house, and pointing to the trees and grass, said, "What do you make of those?" "God's beautiful works," I replied. "Yes," responded the old man, "*the thoughts of God materialised.*" He had grasped a truth overlooked by many. A word or two will suffice as to another general experience of mankind, viz:

(B). *The facts of Clairvoyance and Clairaudience.*

That these super-physical powers are still existent

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in man must be admitted, whatever hypothesis we adopt to account for them. The testimony that declares their existence may not be so widespread as that which bears witness that the departed have been seen after death ; but at all events it is general, clear and emphatic. That is acknowledged by all who know anything of the subject. Not only have there been, but there are at this present moment, many persons in all parts of the world who are either themselves clairvoyant and clairaudient, or who, not so endowed, can bear witness that those powers are possessed by others whom they know.

The subject comes rightly within the province of science. It calls for no exercise of faith, but of knowledge. The *facts* may be ascertained by inquiry and observation. Anyone may prove for himself that there are numbers of men and women who are clairvoyant and clairaudient. I have myself done so, and am as convinced that many are so gifted as I am certain that I can physically see and hear.

The phases of clairvoyance and clairaudience, to which allusion has been made, are not experiences merely of the past, but also of the present. What was true of Bible-times is true of to-day. There are, at the present time, persons who can see and hear external spiritual realities that are *near* them, although

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those realities are imperceptible to the ordinary senses. There are others who can see and hear spiritual realities *distant* so far as to be absolutely beyond the range of material vision and hearing. And, further, there are many who can clairvoyantly see and clairaudiently hear external *physical* realities, under circumstances of time and distance precluding all possibility of ordinary eyes and ears being the media of the sight and hearing. Those who are ignorant of these facts, or knowing them, ignore them, will do well to give the subject careful study.

The facts afford data helpful to those who wish to give a right answer to the question—"What is man?"

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PART III

The Spiritual World—The Bible's Testimony

In the foregoing pages we have endeavoured to show that Holy Scripture, supported by independent testimony, most clearly teaches that man, although living for a while on a physical earth, is not on that account merely a physical creature. At the basis of his being he is spirit, and that spirit, whether in the earth-life or the life that will follow, lives no vague and abstract existence, but is enclosed in its own spirit-body, from which it is never dissevered. Thus, a man is no less a man without his earthly tenement than with it.

Physical death does not terminate nor even suspend his existence; nor does it destroy or impair his mind and faculties, except those that pertain to his external coarse and temporary envelope. Death detaches him from a close association with the physical, but only to launch him more completely into the Spiritual. Through that gateway he passes to a higher development of life. He becomes then, in a

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degree impossible to him in this life, *en rapport* with a great Spiritual World.

The question naturally suggests itself —

Where is that World?

All sorts of curious, not to say grotesque, ideas have prevailed in the past as to its whereabouts. To enumerate them at length would fill a volume. The Jews (as has been already mentioned) thought that the Spiritual World into which persons pass at death was located somewhere in the bowels of the earth. We find a survival of this idea in the words of our creed, "He *descended* into Hell" (*i.e.*, Hades, the abode of the departed).

Several writers of note have pointed out that this word "*descended*" gives an indication of the mental attitude of the ancient Jews, Greeks and Romans, and also of the Christians of the Middle and later ages, in regard to the life beyond the grave. They viewed it rather as a *descent* than an ascent. To them, in whatever way they might picture a future Heaven, the next life was not an advance upon the present one, but the opposite. At best, it was only a sort of half-life; a going down into an objectionable under-world of gloom and shadows. That thought has dominated Roman Christianity more or less, from the fourth or fifth century until the pres-

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ent time, and it has only been absent from Protestant theology because Protestantism has all but wholly ignored the existence of an Intermediate World.

In the Middle Ages, the idea found its fullest expression in that truly marvellous, but (as far as doctrine is concerned) terribly blasphemous poem of Dante.

Seeing that a powerful church has countenanced such awful caricature of the Spiritual World and God's dealings as to it, one ceases to wonder that many have not believed in the existence of that World, and in a *good* God Himself. Surely we have here an indirect proof that the Christian religion is truth. Had it not been so, it would long ago have been smothered by the doctrinal monstrosities that men have plied upon it. But it must be remembered that the erroneous ideas entertained about the Spiritual World were based upon altogether wrong ideas of the physical universe. The scholars and theologians of the Middle Ages adopted the Ptolemaic theory, and supposed that the earth was the chief spot of the universe; the centre of gravity, and the only spot that was at rest.

During the last four hundred years, the Ptolemaic theory has been displaced by the Copernican. We

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of to-day count our earth as no more than a tiny speck in a vast universe of matter.

This change of theory has revolutionised the ideas of thoughtful men as to the whereabouts of the World of Spirit. No longer is it possible to assign it a little circumscribed place, somewhere in the interior of a small planet, out of a vast family of mighty suns and earths. Shocking as it may appear to a good many present-day Christians, who seem to be enamoured of Mediæval thought and practice, we venture to say that it seems a pity that the Apostles' Creed does not declare the glorious fact that the loving Saviour visited the realm of the departed, in a better way than it does.

When we get out of the atmosphere of Mediæval theology, which has added to, and distorted so much the truth of God, we come at once into contact with a far more healthy and sensible tone of thought in respect to the Spirit-World. This is notably the case as to the early Eastern Church. One has but to read the writings of the early Eastern Fathers, to see how immeasurably better and grander were their conceptions of God and of a Life Beyond than the conceptions of later Western Fathers of the Church, from Augustine downward.

To the former, the Spirit-World was a world to

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be desired. Like St. Paul, they seemed convinced that "to die is gain" (Phil. i. 21 v.). It was a world whose characteristics are brightness and advancement; a world pregnant with infinite possibilities for the human race. To the latter, it was a world of gloom, upon entering which the destiny of everybody was irrevocably fixed; at whose portals nine-tenths of mankind must abandon hope; and from whose recesses came, to the ears of credulity, the groans of distressed Christians in Purgatory, and the regrets that an earthly life had been left behind.

What, we ask, can be more suggestive than the fact that the Western Church has taught, and still teaches that her sons and daughters should be prayed out of the pain and wretchedness of the Spiritual!

If we pursue our inquiries to the still earlier ages of Christian thought, we find the Spirit-World regarded, not in accordance with Western but Eastern ideas.

To the Post-Apostolic Church, life after death was no gloomy and dreadful experience, which (as in later ages of the Church) had to be symbolised by draping the altars and vesting the priests in black, and adopting all the hideous and pagan paraphernalia of despair. The World Beyond, to them, was

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a bright and happy place; an advance upon the earthly life.

One thing, however, must strike us in regard to the idea of that age—the Spiritual World was thought to be very *far away*.

The inscriptions to be found in the catacombs of Rome—those dark caverns in which the early Christians secretly worshipped, and found a resting-place for their martyred bodies—bear witness to this. Here is a specimen of many epitaphs, "In Christ, Alexander is not dead, but lives *beyond the stars*, and his body rests in this tomb."

We come, now, to the idea that at present prevails in regard to the Spirit-World, and we find it, in spite of a lately-revived veneration for all that is Mediæval, more closely allied to the Eastern and early Christian than to the Western idea. Although there are a considerable number of persons in the Church of England, who tack their faith to the pronouncements of the Church teachers of the middle centuries, and think it hardly possible that the Fathers could make a mistake, yet, I suppose, it would be difficult to find any intelligent man who imagines that those Fathers were right in endorsing Dante's idea of the Life Beyond. The advance of *true* science, which can never be hostile to the *true*

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spiritual, has made it absurd for anyone to believe that the great majority of the departed—earth's millions of millions who have lived and died—are pent up in fiery subterranean chambers in the heart of this planet. We have discarded the idea, once and for all, as many other unworthy Mediæval ideas will have to be discarded, in order that Christianity may hold the hearts and minds of thoughtful men.

Further, the present-day idea of the Spiritual World (as we have said) is closely allied to the idea of the early Eastern Church and the Post-Apostolic Church.

However silent on the subject most of the preachers may be, we cannot gainsay the fact that outside the pulpit and the religious literature of the conventional type, the ideas set forth in a variety of ways by cultured men and women go to show that they are dissatisfied with the ordinary representation of the World Beyond, and are getting to regard it as a World of light, progress and possibility. In this respect we are fast coming into touch with the brighter and more hopeful teaching of the early Eastern Fathers. Those men dared to believe in, and openly proclaim such goodness in God, such triumphs for Christ, such hope, such recovery of lost sheep after death, as would have a century ago

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made the hair of Western divines—Anglican, Roman and Nonconformist—stand on end in orthodox horror.

But when we have noted this much-needed advance of the present age towards a worthier and more God-honouring conception of the World into which we all must go, it cannot be denied that, among the bulk of Christian people, the idea of the followers of Christ persecuted by the Roman emperors still lingers. "Alexander is not dead, but lives *beyond the stars.*"

Yes, the general idea is a very vague and inadequate one. The words just quoted exactly voice the belief of most persons as to the whereabouts of the Spiritual World. They think of it as a certain fixed locality, "far, far away," in a remote and mysterious corner of space; a "happy land" for some, a very unhappy land for others; but still, very, very far away. The mourner looks up through his tears at the stars (as probably the early Christians did) as though he would fix his gaze upon a spot in infinity where his dear one is most likely to be. "Far, far away!" Yes, so far, that a return of the dear one is just the event thought to be impossible. The Bible may declare the opposite, but its statements are calmly ignored, or explained away, and

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a line from Shakespeare is strangely accepted as proof that the World Beyond is "a country from whose bourne no traveller returns."

It is to be regretted that this "far, far away" idea is still entertained by many. It creates an imagined gulf between us and the Spiritual Universe; it minimises our chances of rightly estimating what we are; it adds bitterness to the pang of separation; it detracts from the comfort that we might draw from the Gospel of Christ; it leaves behind the greater part of "the sting of death," and lastly, it obscures a glorious truth disclosed in the Word of God.

To that word we turn for the answer, "*Where* is the Spiritual World?"

The Spiritual World is everywhere, and interpenetrates the Physical

So accustomed are we to think and speak of the World of Spirit as occupying a defined and particular spot in the universe, and as being altogether detached from the physical man and the physical earth, that to many it is a novel and startling thought that the Spiritual World (or to use a more accurate term—the Spiritual *Universe*) extends *everywhere*. And yet, undoubtedly, this is a great truth disclosed by the Bible.

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That Book, indeed, shows that there are *particular* spheres or localities in the Spiritual World, but it also shows that the World itself extends far and away beyond them. It cannot be restricted to any one spot or spots, for the reason that there is no point in all the vast universe where it is not.

Co-extensive with creation, it fills all space and, interpenetrating the physical, makes this earth or any other planet, any district, house, room, or place whatsoever as much a part of the Spiritual World as any other region where there is life and intelligence.

But this is not all. The Bible shows that the Spiritual World also interpenetrates us and reaches to the interior part of our being. From Genesis to Revelation that World is represented as being so interwoven with man and his surroundings that, although still living on the plane of the physical and clothed with flesh, he may, nevertheless, be in the very midst of the Spiritual, and in a number of cases be conscious of its nearness, and sensible to its realities.

Further, it shows that what is needed to make a man conscious of the closeness of the Spiritual, and to see and hear that which encompasses him is not the bringing of the Spiritual World to him, or him to that World, but the opening of the faculties of

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the spiritual part in him—his own spirit-body. To put it in scientific language, it is a case of "adaptation to environment."

Thus, a person before dying is not outside the Spiritual World, although, the eyes and ears of his inner body being unopened, and the veil of flesh interposing, the perception of it may be wanting. The spiritual presses upon him, but he may not be *en rapport* with it.

Again, a person whose earthly body has just died is as much in the Spiritual World within the four walls of his death-chamber as he would be had his released spirit-body been transported to the other side of the furthermost star.

Let me illustrate what I mean by this last statement; seeing that it is a common error to suppose that a person must go a long distance away from this earth before he can get into the Spiritual World. Take the case of anyone dying. The spirit of that person, enclosed in its spiritual envelope, is then liberated from its tabernacle of flesh and leaves the dead thing behind. If (as is probably the case) that liberation takes place in the room in which the death occurred, there must be a point of time when, in that chamber, there are, distinct from one another, the dead body and the spiritual man who has

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shortly before been encased in it. But he is now no longer on the plane of matter: the medium through which he was able to be in contact with the physical has been cast aside. He is on the plane of spirit. He is in the Spiritual World of which *that death chamber* is a part. Wherever he may go subsequently, he will not be more a spiritual being in a Spiritual World than he is within those four walls. Outside that room he will find a wider scope for exercise and observation, but the principle of his being, and the principle of the World to which his being belongs, will not be altered. We do not alter the nature of a fish or the nature of the element for which it is adapted, when we take the little creature from the tank in which it first came into adjustment with the water and put it into the lake. In both places it is in its world.

This would seem the place to record a remarkable statement sent to me for perusal a short time since. It appeared in the form of a letter to one of the papers, and was written by a medical man who gave his own experience of dying, after having been restored to earthly life after that event. The statement was countersigned by two other doctors who were medically attending him. The

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gentleman had had a severe illness, and himself knew at last that there was no hope of his recovery. About an hour before the change came, he states that he was suddenly conscious that there was within his body a something that seemed as if it were floating in much the same way as a boat moored to a quay floats with the rise and fall of the water. Presently he became conscious of another sensation. It was as if a number of tiny cords or fibres along both sides of his entire body were being snapped one after another. The sensation was not painful. This went on for some time, until at length it seemed as if this floating something were contracting upward from the feet. Soon the contraction extended as far as the knees, and then he knew that the parts below that point were dead. The contraction continued until the centre of the body was reached, and then he was aware that all below the waist was likewise dead. Later he could feel that the contraction had extended to his chest, and lastly to his head. Then came an oblivion, and his next consciousness was that he himself was out of his body and standing beside the bed. He could see he was still in shape, but seemed to be a little taller than he had been in his other body. He distinctly remembered seeing

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one of the doctors feel for the pulse, and the other place his hand over the heart of the motionless form. He saw also his wife and daughter kneeling on either side of the bed, both weeping. He tried to arrest their attention, but could not, and although he spoke to them they did not hear his voice. Then he moved across the room and lingered a moment at the door watching the scene. An impulse was drawing him away from the death-chamber. He distinctly remembered passing down the staircase out of his house into the garden, where he particularly noticed the redness of the ground washed by the heavy rains. Anon, he came to the road and brushed by several persons who evidently were not conscious of his presence. Then a darkness and a numbness fell upon him, and his next consciousness was that he was in bed, a tenant again of his earthly body.

Now, all this we admit might be easily attributed to no more than a mental impression, but for one fact. Both the doctors who countersigned that statement positively assert that their friend *had actually died.* As medical men, they declare that all the acknowledged signs of death were present, and append their names to the declaration.

The testimony of the doctor who had the ex-

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perience was given after he had been restored to health, and I see no reason for doubting that his spirit-body really did leave its earthly tenement and came back to it as the spirit-body of Lazarus did.

If that be so, then here is an illustration of the interpenetration of the spiritual and the physical. That doctor in his spirit-body, when in his house, his garden, and by the roadside, was in the Spiritual World.

One can hardly read his experience as to the snapping of those internal cords without recalling the words, "Or ever *the silver cord* be loosed" (Eccles. xii. 6 v.).

There are two important reasons that we must briefly notice which justify the belief that the Spiritual interpenetrates the physical, quite apart from all explicit statements of the fact.

The first is, it would be impossible for man to be essentially a spiritual being were it not so. We believe that within the earthly body of a person there dwells a soul, and that in its nature is *spirit.* But suppose that the Spiritual did not interpenetrate the physical; suppose that the Spiritual World did not touch (as it were) the man until he stepped out of the flesh—what then? We contend that it would be impossible for his spirit and its enveloping spirit-

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body to exist. They would have no sphere in which spirit-life would be possible. To imagine a spirit living in an environment made up of nothing but the physical is as unscientific and absurd as it would be to suppose that a fish could live in a glass bowl without any water. Death (as we have already stated) launches a person more fully and consciously into the Spiritual World, as birth introduces an unborn child more fully and consciously into the physical world; but in neither case would there have been any life at all to advance unless there had been a previous living in a sphere *of the nature of that* to which advancement is made.

The physical nature of the unborn child could have had no existence except within the radius of the physical; nor could our spirit have come into being, and maintain that being as a sojourner in the flesh, except within the radius of the Spiritual.

Whether within or without the physical body, whether here on earth, or progressing in Paradise, or blest in Heaven, no spirit can exist outside the Spiritual World.

This, then, is what we have to realise, viz, that Man, now while living in the earth-life, is in *two* Worlds—the Material and the Spiritual—and is vitally connected with both. He maintains his phys-

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ical being because of the nearness and interpenetration of the physical, and he maintains his spirit's existence because of the interpenetration of the Spiritual.

Thus, the Spiritual World is not far away, and unrelated to him as he lives out the first stage of his existence on earth. It is very, very close—so close that it is within him: he lives, and has his spiritual being in it.

If it were not so, then it seems to me that we must admit that the Materialist is right, and Man, in a world uninterpenetrated by the Spiritual, can be no more than a highly organised piece of animated matter.

We glance now at the other reason that makes it a credible belief that the Spiritual interpenetrates the physical.

Without this interpenetration, in what way can we account for the wonders connected with Matter?

For example, Matter assumes a variety of forms, as seen in the bodies of men, animals, birds, fishes, insects, and the forms of trees, flowers, grasses, etc. All these things are characterised by *life*. Look at a human hand, a bird's wing, a fish's fin, a worm's elastic length. What do you see in them? *Design*

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—yes, marvellous contrivances toward foreseen ends. Examine a butterfly, a flower, a fruit-blossom, a fern-leaf. To what do they point? To exquisite harmony and beauty in colour and shape.

But whence this life, this design, and harmonious beauty? Do you say, as some do, that the cause lies in Matter itself, which has the power of expressing itself in these ways? Surely that cannot be right or sensible.

Matter in itself, apart from a quickening and moulding touch—an interpenetration from without—is a *dead* thing; and no dead thing, nor any number of configurations of dead things, can possibly produce a *living* form. Whatever potentialities are resident in Matter have been infused into it. That is admitted by the best scientists of the day.

Again, no one will suppose that an atom or a molecule is gifted with forethought. But adaptation to ends presupposes forethought. How do we account for the design that is everywhere seen? Do dead and mindless particles without forethought create that attribute when they mass themselves under certain combinations? Such an idea seems to require a considerable amount of blind credulity.

Once more, Matter in itself can have no discernment of colour and shape. How, then, is it able,

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simply by its own inherent powers and resources, to unerringly arrange its atoms on the lines of harmony and beauty?

These are considerations, we think, that point to there being a penetration of the Spiritual into the physical. There could be no life, design and beauty in the material world without it.

How infinitely reasonable the thought that God being a Spirit, at the base of all material existence lies spirit, and that the works of Nature are but His thoughts and spiritual energies *materialised!*

> "Spirit aye shapeth Matter into view,
> As Music wears the forms it passes through.
> Spirit is lord of substance, Matter's sole
> First Cause and forming power and final goal."

But further, material things are the *correspondences* to things existing in the realm of spirit. They are coarser representations of them; their counterparts on a lower plane of being. The originals are spiritual, not physical. The flower you hold in your hand is a correspondence. Its prototype is in the Spiritual World. It is a spiritual idea printed in the book of Matter.

That physical body of yours, too, is a correspondence. Its archetype is a spirit-body within it, and that latter belongs also to the Spiritual World.

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The material flower will fade, and the material body will be disintegrated, and its component parts will form other objects, but their prototypes will remain.

Was not that thought in the mind of St. Paul when he wrote, "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18 v.)?

Then lastly (for we can now but barely touch this vast subject), it is because the Spiritual streams into dull, inert, mindless Matter that physical things are what they are.

Why is one flower so different from fifty other kinds growing in the same soil? What lies behind its distinctive form? Something—science cannot tell what. We think it to be an interpenetrating spiritual principle that has given to the particles drawn from the ground and atmosphere the constructive touch that builds up the body of that flower.

There is our earthly body. What lies behind the form of that? Again we reply, "spirit." It is an in-dwelling spirit-body that gives the moulding touch to the ever-changing atoms of which our outer body is composed. So much so that very often a man's character and disposition are stamped upon his face.

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These, then, are thoughts that impel us to the belief that the Spiritual and the physical overlap.

It remains for us to show that the Bible most emphatically teaches that the Spiritual World interpenetrates Man and his earthly environment.

To give the *whole* testimony of the Book on this point would entail the reproduction of the greater part of its contents. We can, therefore, only adduce some of its statements. But these will suffice to put the reader on a track of interesting thought that he can follow for himself.

The Bible's Statements.

For convenience sake, we shall group the Biblical records of Man's experiences of the Spiritual World under a few heads.

(A). *Spiritual beings have been seen.*

The Lord *appeared* unto Abraham at Mamre (Gen. xviii. 1 v.).

Angels of God met Jacob, and he *saw* them, after his departure from Laban (Gen. xxxii. 1 and 2 v.).

The same man *wrestled with* a being, of whose super-physical nature he was so convinced as to say, "I have seen God face to face" (Gen. xxxii. 24–30 v.).

An angel *appeared* to Moses near Horeb (Ex. iii. 2 v.).

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Balaam, after the opening of his spiritual eyes, *saw* the angel of the Lord standing in the way (Num. xxii. 31 v.).

Joshua *beheld* a spiritual being, who described himself as "The Captain of the host of the Lord," standing over against him (Josh. v. 13 v.).

An angel *appeared* to Gideon at Ophrah (Judges vi. 12 v.).

Samuel, the prophet, *was seen* after death in the cave of the woman of En-dor (1 Sam. xxviii. 12–14 v.).

David and Ornan both *saw* an angel by the threshing-place (2 Sam. xxiv. 17 v., and 1 Chron. xxi. 20 v.).

The Lord *appeared* to Solomon (2 Chron. vii. 12 v.).

An angel *appeared* to Zacharias the priest (Luke i. 11 v.).

The angel Gabriel *came to* the mother of our Lord (Luke i. 28 v.).

The angel of the Lord *came upon* the shepherds of Bethlehem (Luke ii. 9 v.).

Suddenly a multitude of heavenly beings *were with* this angel, in the presence of the men (13 v.).

Jesus and John the Baptist both *saw* the Spirit of

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God descending as a dove (Matt. iii. 16 v., and John i. 32 and 34 v.).

Moses and Elijah, after their departure from earth, *appeared to* three Apostles, on the mount of Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 3 v.; Mark ix. 4 v., and Luke ix. 31 v.).

The *presence* of an angel at Christ's sepulchre so alarmed the watchers that they became as dead men (Matt. xxxviii. 4 v.).

The women, entering the same sepulchre, *saw* a spiritual being, and were affrighted (Mark xvi. 5 v.).

After the resurrection of Christ, many departed saints *appeared* unto many at Jerusalem (Matt. xxvii. 52 v.).

Two spiritual beings *stood by* the disciples on Mount Olivet (Acts i. 10 v.).

St. Stephen, just before his martyrdom, *saw* Christ (Acts vii. 55 v.).

Christ, after He had left the earth, *was seen* by St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 8 v.).

Angels *stood before* Cornelius (Acts x. 30 v.); *by the side of* St. Peter, in the prison (Acts xii. 7 v.); and *by* St. Paul, on board a ship (Acts xxvii. 23 v.).

It is noteworthy that, in many of the Biblical accounts of spiritual appearances, the terms "man" or "men" are used as interchangeable terms for

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"angel" or "angels." Thus, "three *men*" stood by Abraham as he sat at his tent door.

A "*man*" wrestled with Jacob until the breaking of the day.

A "young *man*" arrayed in a white robe sat within the sepulchre.

"Two *men*" stood beside the disciples on Olivet.

Cornelius, in recounting his spiritual experience, said, "A *man* stood before me in bright clothing."

The contexts of these particular passages show that they were spiritual beings, and not men on the plane of the material, to whom allusion was made. Is there nothing suggestive in this interchange of terms? Does it imply, first, that the form of an angel is not dissimilar to that of a man; and, next, that it is likely that the spiritual intelligences seen may not in every case have been angels (in the common acceptation of the word), but men who had left this earth, and were living, and doing their part from the plane of spirit towards the consummation of God's "eternal purpose"?

At all events, the thought is a welcome one; a pleasant set-off against the popular idea that departed saints have nothing to do but to enjoy "beatific visions."

(B). *Spiritual manifestations have been seen.*

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Moses, in the wilderness, beheld a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. That it was a super-physical fire is seen in the fact that the bush burned, but was not consumed (Ex. iii. 2 v.).

The Israelites, on leaving Egypt, were guided by a pillar of cloud, whose non-physical nature is denoted by its appearance, at night, as a pillar of fire (Ex. xiii. 21 v.).

When Moses ascended Mount Sinai, the "glory" of the Lord abode upon the mountain, and the sight of it was like devouring fire in the eyes of the children of Israel (Ex. xxiv. 16 and 17 v.).

The same "glory" filled the tabernacle (Ex. xi. 34 and 35 v.).

At the prayer of Elijah, on Mount Carmel, the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the sacrifice, wood, stones and dust, and licked up the water in the trench around the altar (1 Kings xviii. 38 v.).

At the passing away of the same prophet, Elisha saw a chariot of fire, and horses of fire (2 Kings ii. 12 v.).

The young man, the servant of Elisha, saw, when the eyes of his spirit-body had been opened, in answer to the prayer of the Seer, the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about his master (2 Kings vi. 17 v.).

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The "glory" of the Lord filled the newly-dedicated temple of King Solomon (2 Chron. v. 14 v.).

On the same occasion, "when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped" (2 Chron. vii. 3 v.). That is to say, the sight of the super-normal awed them.

Belshazzar, in the midst of a licentious banquet, saw a spiritual materialisation, that took the form of the fingers of a man's hand writing his sentence of condemnation upon the plaister of the wall of the King's palace (Dan. v. 5 v.).

At night a bright light (physically unaccountable) shone round about the shepherds of Bethlehem (Luke ii. 9 v.).

The Eastern philosophers were induced to travel to Jerusalem in consequence of a moving light in the atmosphere (mistaken by them for a star), which at length hovered over the place where the infant Saviour was (Matt. ii. 9. v.).

At the Transfiguration (that scene, the import of which has been so little grasped by the Christian Church), a bright cloud overshadowed the three Apostles (Matt. vii. 5 v.).

At the Crucifixion, the enormous veil of the temple

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was rent in twain from the top to the bottom by unseen hands (Matt. xxvii. 51 v.).

At Pentecost, an abnormal sound, as of a rushing of a mighty wind, was heard and felt, and tongues of fire were seen (Acts ii. 2 and 3 v.).

St. Stephen, as he stood before the Council, was spiritually overshadowed, and all present "saw his face as it had been the face of *an angel*" (Acts vi. 15 v.).

Saul of Tarsus, on his errand of persecution, as well as those with him, saw a great light that blinded the former (Acts ix. 3 and 8 v., and xxii. 9 v.).

I make but one comment as regards these records. Those who have investigated the subject know perfectly well that manifestations, resembling in many points those just enumerated, are *present-day* experiences. There are thousands to whom we can appeal, who have seen non-physical lights, cloud-like appearances, partial and complete materialisations, and overshadowings whereby the aspect of a person's face has been changed. There are thousands before whose eyes, in the presence of others, material objects have been moved and dealt with in ways unexplainable by any operations of physical force.

We ask, are those good Christians consistent, who devoutly, but lackadaisically, assent to the Bible,

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without ever pausing to consider what its statements imply, and in the next breath pronounce phenomena now happening to be impossible and absurd? If the testimony of honest, clever and educated men of to-day is not to be believed, why accept the statements of the Bible-writers? Had not these persons who assumed this attitude better be logical and discard one-half of the Scripture as untruthful and misleading?

It is a curious fact that of all persons least ready to grasp the truths of a Spiritual World, many Christians stand foremost. Like the Pharisees of old, they are very "religious," and read the Text-Book of the Spiritual; but "seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

I know a good clergyman, who constantly preaches on such subjects as the burning bush, the Shekinah, the handwriting on the wall, and the tongues of fire, and he solemnly warned me not to continue writing about the Spiritual World lest Christian people should think I was growing weak in my intellect.

(C). *Spiritual voices have been heard.*

We have already adduced a number of Biblical instances in which spiritual beings were seen by

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men while still living on earth. In most of those instances the beings seen are shown, also, to have conversed with the persons to whom they appeared.

(1). Thus the voices of *visible angels* were heard by—

Abraham, on the plains of Mamre.

Moses, at the burning bush.

Balaam, as he went to do the bidding of the princes of Moab.

Joshua, when near to Jericho.

Gideon, at Ophrah.

Elijah, as he reclined beneath a juniper tree.

Zacharias, in the Temple of Jerusalem.

The Virgin Mary, in her home at Nazareth.

The shepherds, while watching their flocks.

The women, at the Sepulchre.

The disciples, on Mount Olivet.

Cornelius, in his house.

St. Peter, in the prison.

St. Paul, on the ship.

(2). The voices of other *visible spiritual beings* were heard.

The woman of En-dor (whether Saul on that occasion was clairvoyant, or not) saw the spirit of Samuel, and the latter addressed the king at length, foretelling that he and his sons should on the morrow be

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in the Spiritual World with him. At the Transfiguration, the three Apostles saw Moses and Elijah, and heard them conversing with the Saviour concerning His decease that He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

St. John, the venerable Bishop of Ephesus, during his banishment, on the dreary Isle of Patmos, saw Christ Himself, Who cheered His faithful servant, and told him a truth (so little grasped) that He held the Keys of *Hades*.

(3). The voices of *invisible* spiritual beings were heard.

Adam and Eve heard a Voice in the garden, in the cool of the day. No hint is given that the Divine Presence was seen.

On several occasions, apparently apart from any visible demonstration, that same Voice was heard by Abraham. That the Biblical writer (or writers) intended that the experiences are not to be viewed as mental impressions on the part of Abraham, is seen in the fact that the patriarch is represented as entering into conversation with the Voice.

An invisible angel called to Hagar "out of heaven," when she was sitting in the wilderness, and weeping over the prospect of the death of her boy.

Some time afterwards, an angel, in the same

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way, spoke to Abraham, and bade him spare his son.

At Sinai, the people of Israel saw no Presence of God, but heard His Voice conversing with Moses.

In one of the Tabernacle-chambers, an unseen Speaker three times called the boy Samuel by name, and conveyed through him a message to Eli.

At Horeb, after a wild convulsion of nature, Elijah heard "a still, small voice" that reproved him for his pessimism and despair.

Eliphaz, the Temanite, recounts his experience of hearing a voice from an unseen spiritual Intelligence.

"Then a spirit passed before my face;
The hair of my flesh stood up.
It stood still, but I could not discern the appearance thereof;
A form was before mine eyes:
There was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,
Shall mortal man be more just than God?"

(Job iv. 15–17 v., Revised Version.)

At the baptism of our Lord, the Father was invisible, but His Voice was heard proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son."

This Voice is referred to (in 2 Pet. i. 17 v.) as having come from "the excellent glory."

At the Transfiguration, the Voice of the same

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unseen Speaker was heard again, declaring the same truth.

Within the precincts of the Temple at Jerusalem, it was heard a third time: "The people that stood by, and *heard* it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him."

The voice of Christ addressed Saul of Tarsus, and those who were journeying with him "stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man."

At this point, too, it will be well to notice a phrase so very often used in Scripture—"The *word* of the Lord." It is represented as coming to the seers, the prophets and others.

What meaning are we to attach to it? The one that seems most reasonable to us, is that it was the voice of a Spiritual Presence, not seen, but heard clairaudiently.

Two passages seem to suggest this. One, referring to a revelation made to Samuel concerning Saul, states—"Now the Lord had told Samuel *in his ear*, etc." (Hebrew:—had uncovered the ear) (1 Sam. ix. 15 v.). The other—in respect to the time of Eli—"The *word* of the Lord was precious (rare) in those days; there was no open (widely-spread) *vision*" (1 Sam. iii. 1 v.). Here spiritual *hearing* and *sight* appear to be contrasted.

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(D). *Spiritual beings have controlled the bodies and minds of men.*

In dealing with this phase of Biblical testimony, one can hardly fail to notice two obvious facts. The first is, how closely the subject of spirit-control touches the question of spiritual interpenetration; and the next is, how persistently and emphatically spirit-control is asserted in Scripture.

If it can be shown that spiritual intelligences do sometimes use the physical bodies of men and women, and also their minds, as the media of contact with the physical, then, we contend, the interpenetration of the Spiritual is placed beyond all doubt. Were it possible (and it is not so) to prove that every statement of angel, or *post-mortem* appearance, or spiritual manifestation, is false, it would not disprove the fact of spiritual interpenetration. It would only make it likely that men in this world do not *see* and *hear* spiritual presences.

But those presences may be about us, *unseen* and *unheard;* and if they are, then the Spiritual and physical intermingle. It may be asked—How can we be certain that such presences are actually about us? We answer—in much the same way as we become certain of other things; viz, by gathering and weighing testimony, observing and examining

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facts, and forming logical conclusions in regard to those facts.

In this case, we have, first, the testimony; that of the Bible, very persistent, very circumstantial and emphatic, on the subject of spirit-control; and yet, voluminous as it is, little in comparison with the testimony of the present age.

Then, next, we have facts that we may verify for ourselves, viz, numbers of persons, men and women, exhibiting powers of mind, as well as resources of knowledge and speech, that are clearly seen to be, and admitted by themselves to be, *not their own;* and are, moreover, declared to be the result of spirit-guidance. Lastly, we come to what we contend is a logical conclusion, which is, that as no physical explanation can possibly account for these phenomena, the unanimous and unvarying spiritual explanation of the persons themselves (supported by the deliberate statements of Scripture) is more likely to be right than wrong.

Now I dare say this will startle many good people who live in little religious, social and literary worlds of conventional thought, and never go outside of them. But an unfamiliar thought will do them no harm. Many are ignorant of things that others living in a larger world know to be facts; and, too often

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those most ignorant in such matters are foremost in proclaiming that those things cannot possibly be.

It is so in respect to the attitude of many towards *post-mortem* appearances and all other phases of spiritual power and influence. When no personal experience of such things has been vouchsafed to them, thousands of Christian folk are ready to explain by any hypothesis, except the Bible's (the most sensible one), all the statements of those who have had the experience.

To such persons we say—Do you really wish to ascertain the truth about the spiritual control? If so, get out of your mental groove; investigate existing facts; fling off the trammels of conventionality; open your mind to the in-letting of knowledge, however strange to you; recognise that there are many statements in Scripture that neither you, nor your particular Church, has as yet fully understood; and be not presumptuous enough to label as absurd and impossible that which the Christ and the Holy Book declare to be *facts* of human experience.

As illustrative of what I stated concerning some persons exhibiting powers of mind and resources of knowledge and speech surpassing their own, I will instance one case, out of several that have been within the limit of my own experience.

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A few months ago, I was invited by intimate friends to meet at their house a young man, an acquaintance of theirs, who had recently manifested extraordinary powers that astonished himself, and upset the ideas of the members of the religious community to which he belonged. These good people (like the Pharisees in conflict with our Lord) did not hesitate to tell him that the cause of what he exhibited was Satanic—an explanation, by the way, that has been very often put forth to account for anything in any degree super-normal.

On the occasion to which I am referring, I conversed with this young man for some time on ordinary topics, and discovered that he was by no means a well-educated person. He dropped his aspirates, made grammatical blunders, and badly constructed his sentences. I mention this only because it has an important bearing upon what afterwards occurred.

After we had conversed awhile, he suddenly moved uneasily, and appeared to faint, and remained for about five minutes motionless, his eyes being closed.

My friends had previously seen him in this condition, and told me he was under control, and in a trance-state. I had seen persons entranced, and

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determined to carefully note whatever might happen.

At length, the young man lightly raised himself in the chair in which he was reclining, and, with his eyes still closed, commenced to speak in a language unknown to me, and in a tone of voice not at all resembling his own.

Among those present was a lady who had spent several years in India. She had never seen the young man before.

When he commenced speaking, she whispered to me that he was talking in Hindustanee—a tongue with which she was sufficiently acquainted to be able to recognise it.

I inquired of my friends if the young man himself knew that language. They said that in his normal state he had no knowledge of it (which seemed exceedingly probable); but that under control he spoke it fluently.

I asked who the control was, and they told me he was the spirit of a man who, in earth-life, had been a Hindoo of high caste and culture.

I asked how they knew that, and they stated the control himself had declared it.

I next asked my friends if questions put by me would be heard and answered. They replied that

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the young man was unconscious of all that took place while he was in the trance condition, but the control could hear, and on a previous occasion had answered questions through the vocal organs of the young man.

Now, I give, as accurately as I can remember, the conversation that then ensued. The answers were given in English, and the words were pronounced exactly as a foreigner would pronounce them. Now and again the speaker would pause for a moment, as if casting about for a word. Sometimes he failed to remember it, and when I gave it, thanked me, and continued.

QUESTION:—You claim—do you not—to be a spiritual intelligence, speaking through the physical organs of Mr. A?

ANSWER:—Yes.

QUESTION:—Who are you?

ANSWER:—I am a man who lived in India, when in the earth-life, and spent a great portion of my time in studying the truths that relate to this World in which I now am.

QUESTION:—Is Mr. A conscious that you are speaking through him?

ANSWER:—No. The controlling power of his material body, which is his spirit-body, is in a state

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of unconsciousness, and *I* am exercising the control.

QUESTION:—If you, as you say, are taking the place of the spirit of Mr. A, in regard to his physical body, has *his* spirit left that body?

ANSWER:—Yes.

QUESTION:—Where is it, or rather, where is he?

ANSWER:—In this room, in a state of unconsciousness.

QUESTION:—But how can that be? Can a man's spirit leave his body before death?

ANSWER:—Most certainly it can, and does, at times. But you as a teacher of the Bible should know that truth.

QUESTION:—Does the Bible then declare it?

ANSWER:—Most assuredly. Does not an apostle say that he was caught up into the third sphere of the Spiritual World; and yet his earthly body did not die until some years afterwards?

QUESTION:—Yes, I am familiar with that statement; but St. Paul himself did not seem to be quite sure whether he was in his outer body, or out of it.

ANSWER:—That is quite possible. Many persons, after passing through what you call "dying," having left the earthly body behind, do not, for a while, realise that it has been cast off. They are still, after

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the change, so really men and women. The apostle, when he had the experience mentioned was out of his earthly body, and the latter was in a state of trance.

QUESTION:—When the spirit of a person is outside his body, is the connection between the spirit and the body maintained?

ANSWER:—Yes; were it not, the earthly body would die.

QUESTION:—Would it under such circumstances be possible to break the connection between an external spirit and its earthly body?

ANSWER:—Yes. A sudden shock might bring it about. Hence to violently arouse a person in a state of trance (when very often the spirit is absent from the body) is very dangerous. It may break the connection, and then the body would die.

QUESTION:—I have taught, and still teach, that the separation of the spirit and spirit-body from its earthly encasement takes place shortly *after* death. Am I right in this?

ANSWER:—No: you are wrong. The separation takes place immediately *before* the death of the body.

QUESTION:—That rather astonishes me.

ANSWER:—I will explain. A little while before

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death, the spirit-body of a person releases itself from the physical form and floats at full length above the latter, with which it is still connected by something not unlike a fine cord. The physical body, as yet, is still alive, but it no longer contains the man. He is in the spirit-body, but unconscious. When that fine spiritual cord is snapped, the separation is effected, and the material life expires. You have the physical counterpart of this cord in the connection that exists between the mother and the babe at birth. The severance of a cord is the preliminary of the entrance of both the man and the babe into a higher plane of being.

QUESTION:—May I ask you a few other questions?

ANSWER:—Certainly.

QUESTION:—What is your object in controlling the body of Mr. A?

ANSWER:—To establish a communication through him with the world I have left.

QUESTION:—For what end?

ANSWER:—To try and convince men of the fact of a World of Spirit.

QUESTION:—But, surely, that fact is acknowledged, is it not? We Christians, for example, acknowledge it.

ANSWER:—Yes; in a way. Your Bible is full of

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testimony regarding it, and you profess to accept its teaching; but not one in every thousand who attend your churches grasps the truths concerning the Spiritual World that Scripture declares.

QUESTION:—Is not that too sweeping an assertion?

ANSWER:—No; you well know that many who read their Bible school themselves to think that all the spiritual facts recorded therein actually did take place *thousands of years ago;* but ask them to believe that like things are happening now; what will they say? Will they not declare it to be incredible and absurd?

QUESTION:—Are they wrong?

ANSWER:—Why ask such a question! Do you suppose that the Spiritual World is now different from what it was before, and at the time when Christ sojourned on your earth? Nearly all the phases of spiritual manifestation described in the Bible are present occurrences.

QUESTION:—If that be so, how comes it that the truth is not better realised?

ANSWER:—Because the tendency of men's minds is too materialistic. When that is the case, a revelation of the Spiritual becomes more difficult.

QUESTION:—Why?

ANSWER:—Because of the feebleness, through dis-

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use, of internal faculties by which the Spiritual can be apprehended. You have the correspondence of this in the physical world. Were you never to use your eyes and your ears there would come a time when, although the organs might still remain, it would be exceedingly difficult to get those eyes and ears to perceive sights and sounds which *exercised* eyes and ears can perceive.

QUESTION:—Do you imply that many Christians who believe in a World to come fail to perceive the *whole* truth concerning the Spiritual?

ANSWER:—Most certainly I do. If you doubt this, question them on the point. Will you find more than one in every hundred, or thousand, who has any idea of a Spiritual World, except as a far-off Heaven at a future time?

QUESTION:—I am afraid your assertion is true.

ANSWER:—Yes; but there is now an ever-increasing number who are reading more intelligently their Bible, and perceiving great truths disclosed therein, which have been lost sight of during past centuries. A great wave of spiritual influence is passing over your world now, and breaking through the hard crust of materialistic thought and feeling. Some of your great thinkers and preachers are beginning to acknowledge the nearness of the Spiritual.

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QUESTION:—Is it granted to *all* who leave the earth-life to set up—as you claim to be doing—this phase of communication with the physical?

ANSWER:—No; many wish to do so, but are not permitted.

QUESTION:—Why so?

ANSWER:—In the case of many spirits, the wish does not spring from a desire to benefit you on the earth plane, but from a mere longing for contact with the world they have left.

QUESTION:—Is this longing wrong?

ANSWER:—It is harmful, unless dictated and sanctified by the promptings of love and unselfishness.

QUESTION:—Explain, please; I do not fully understand you.

ANSWER:—If a spirit, not prompted by love and unselfishness, control a person, he harms both himself and the person he controls.

QUESTION:—In what way does he harm himself?

ANSWER:—By retarding his progress in the Spiritual World. The desire to continue in close contact with the physical, *for the sake of the contact itself*, checks his advance on a higher plane of life and thought. In the case, however, of physical contact being desired only that love and unselfishness may find a field for exercise, the spirit is unharmed, nay,

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more, he is often advanced by the experience. Thus, the contact of Christ with the physical did not diminish aught from the moral and spiritual excellence of His being. His love and unselfishness grew grander thereby.

QUESTION:—In what way does a spirit's control injure the person controlled when the spirit is actuated by nothing beyond the mere desire of physical contact?

ANSWER:—In the same way that the stronger mind of a teacher of low moral tone will injure the boy placed under his guidance. The spirits who control from no motive of love, but only to satisfy a longing for the physical, are low in the scale of moral being; as low, and often far lower, than those they control. No good can come from such.

QUESTION:—But how comes it that this longing for the physical remains in anyone who has passed from this world into the Spiritual? Does not the change of the plane of existence obliterate it?

ANSWER:—No. There are numbers in the Spirit-World, who, when living in your world, never lifted their thoughts and desires above the material. In tastes and inclinations they were "of the earth, earthy." They entered Spirit-life in that state, and, untrained in the Spiritual, it is strange and distaste-

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ful to them. They carried their instincts with them and longed to be back in the physical.

Sometimes they are permitted to gratify their longing, and then there happens that which is recorded in your New Testament—evil spirits control the bodies and minds of men. Christ, when on earth, could see such spirits and they could see Him, and it was His mission to cast them out.

QUESTION:—This, if true, is a terrible fact.

ANSWER:—Yes, and it explains a great deal of the awful crime that stains your earth. If you could see, as we on this side do, you would behold your gin-palaces and drinking saloons thronged with troops of spirits, who in earth-life had been drunkards, gamblers and fornicators. Earth-bound, and no longer able to satiate their still-existing desires, they seek a gratification in frequenting their old haunts, and inciting others to sin. Every unrepentant spirit let loose by the hangman is a menace to society. Have you never noticed that after an execution three or four murders follow in rapid succession? Can you not see the cause of this?

QUESTION:—Do all these evil and earth-bound spirits, then, *perpetually* exercise this awful control?

ANSWER:—Yours would be a fearful world if they did. Few of them, comparatively, can exercise a

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physical control, and only that when the will of their victim is too weak to offer resistance. More commonly their control takes the form of suggestion to the mind. But, happily, behind all that lies the fact that evil is growing less in the universe of God. So many of you fail to realise that God is working for the triumph of good in the World of Spirit. In spite of your Bible, which tells you Christ preached His Gospel to *spirits*, that they might live unto God, you can only think of Him as exercising His saving power on the restricted field of earthly existence.

QUESTION:—That is a beautiful thought, but not a new one to me. I have long since discarded the theology that denies the truth that God's "mercy endureth for ever." But I have other questions I should like to put. Will you tell me—is there not a great danger in regard to spirit-control?

ANSWER:—Most certainly. That is why, in olden times, all intercourse with "familiar spirits" was forbidden to the Israelites. The spirits who were then controlling men were evil. They were the spirits of men who in earth-life had lived in the grossest vice and impurity. Nothing but evil could ensue from such control as that, and as the Israelites themselves, at that period of their history, were

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but little advanced in their knowledge of a Life Beyond (as seen in the earlier books of the Bible), they were forbidden an intercourse with spirits whose earthly surroundings had been of such a character as to make them spirits of low moral type. Probably you will have noted that the age in which intercourse with familiar spirits is so discountenanced yields a very great deal of testimony in regard to intercourse with spiritual beings of an *exalted* class. For instance, angel-visits were frequent, and a servant of God after death—the prophet Samuel—in spite of the existing prohibition, appeared to the women of Endor, and spoke to king Saul.

Later on, you find an apostle of Jesus Christ—who himself knew a great deal about the Spiritual World—showing that he was sensible of the danger underlying spirit-control, while acknowledging the possibilities of good in it. He wrote, "Believe not every spirit; but test the spirits, if they are of God."

QUESTION:—Then persons who are under the control of low spirits may be deceived?

ANSWER:—Yes. When the prophets of old, to whom spiritual control was a common experience, threw themselves open to the control of ignorant

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and lying spirits, they became no longer prophets of God, but false prophets. What do you imagine the words mean—"A lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets"?

QUESTION:—Do you assert that persons can be ignorant and untruthful in the Spiritual World? Does not their entrance into that World at once enlighten them and make lying an impossibility?

ANSWER:—Persons enter the Spiritual World with precisely the same character, enlightenment and disposition as that with which they leave your world, and go into a sphere for which they are fitted. And there they remain until, mentally, morally and spiritually advanced, they are fitted for a higher sphere. You in your world have persons of all sorts and classes. So have we in our World; persons depraved, ignorant, cruel; others, not so morally bad, but ignorant of God and truth; some, partially enlightened, but exhibiting good traits of character and desire; others, better, wiser, nobler, and so on, until a class of spiritual beings is reached, so exalted in knowledge and excellence that many of us have never, as yet, seen them.

QUESTION:—Then I gather from your teaching that a person who has but just entered the Spiritual

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World may not be much better off than in this world?

ANSWER:—As regards his character, on entering our World he is exactly what he was on leaving yours; good or bad; godly or ungodly; ignorant or enlightened; or in any condition that lies between these extremes. What you call the "act of *dying*" does not alter the *character* of a person; he that is unjust will be unjust still; he that is filthy will be filthy still; he that is righteous will be righteous still; and he that is holy will be holy still. As regards, however, his surroundings, he is better off with us than with you. Every sphere of spiritual life, even the lowest, is interpenetrated by influences and ministries of good flowing into it from higher spheres. Consequently, from the lower spheres there is a constant emigration of spirits who are responsive to the good, and these pass to higher planes of life and thought.

QUESTION:—But this fact is not grasped by great numbers of Christians; how is that?

ANSWER:—Because so many of your teachers are purblind; they read the Bible, and fail to see the truths it proclaims. What, for example, could more plainly assert the truth of spirits progressing, than the statement of an apostle, that Christ in our world

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preached to, and reclaimed, a great number of spirits who in earth-life had been godless and debased? The fact is, the importation of Western ideas into Christianity has acted banefully upon the latter. Old Roman conceptions have made your theology hard, cruel and loveless; God is viewed as an Almighty *Magistrate*, instead of a Father, and punishment as *vindictive*, instead of remedial.

QUESTION:—Are all in your World readily responsive to the leadings and impulses of good?

ANSWER:—No, any more than persons in your world are. Some have shaped such characters while in the earth-life that for long after they come to us they remain insensible to good, and only along the highway of bitter experience can they rise to the better.

Some, on the other hand, have developed such noble characters on earth as to start in Spirit-life in a high sphere, and these pass easily onward.

QUESTION:—Do you assert that *all* will ultimately yield to good?

ANSWER:—We in this life do not possess foreknowledge any more than you do; but we know that God is supreme, and the ever-widening stream of tendency is towards Him. But why ask me about this matter? You, as a clergyman, believe

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the Bible, do you not? Consult that Book. Does it not tell you that God will one day be "all in all"; that every will in His universe is ultimately to bow to Him; and that His Christ will not rest so long as one lost sheep has *not* been found?

QUESTION:—Yes, that is so; but hundreds of thousands believe in an everlasting Hell. Must there not be a basis for that idea?

ANSWER:—Undoubtedly. That terrible libel on the power and goodness of God is built up on two words in your Bible wrongly translated.

QUESTION:—Which words?

ANSWER:—You know them; I have *heard* you speak about the mistranslation.

(The words referred to are these—"These shall go away into *everlasting punishment*" (Matt. xxv. 46 v.). Every scholar knows that the Greek of this passage is—εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον=into an *age-long pruning*. "Pruning" is a discipline with a view to *improvement*.)

QUESTION:—Many of the things you have told me appear like familiar truths, and yet I cannot tell when, or where, I learned them. Is this not strange?

ANSWER:—No; you have been taught them.

QUESTION:—By whom?

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ANSWER:—By several in our world who are guiding you.

QUESTION:—But I am not controlled?

ANSWER:—Not physically, but you are mentally. They impress your mind with a thought, and you clothe it with language and ideas.

QUESTION:—Is this possible?

ANSWER:—Read your Bible for the answer. Inspiration (or as it should be more correctly termed, "spiritual *suggestion*") is a fact.

QUESTION:—Are men, then, *still* being guided in this way?

ANSWER:—Yes; many are. Have I not told you that a great wave of spiritual energy is now passing from our World to yours?

QUESTION:—May we hope, then, that men, as time goes on, will better understand the truth concerning the Spiritual than they have hitherto done?

ANSWER: Most assuredly. Have you not, yourself, received the testimony of hundreds that they are craving for clearer light than the schoolmen give? That craving is the forerunner of enlightenment.

QUESTION:—Will the Bible be superseded?

ANSWER:—No; but it will be better understood.

. . . . . .

At this point of the conversation, I put a question

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(I cannot remember what it was) which drew forth a reply marvellous for the depth of thought and beauty of expression contained therein. The reply was concerning God, and the fact that character finds its highest development when Self-hood is absorbed in love and concern for others. It was a long statement, and took, at least, fifteen minutes to deliver.

I could not reproduce it if I tried. I candidly admit that I have not the ability to do so.

I have listened to the sermons of many noted preachers, but no one of them has equalled, in sublimity of idea and charm of diction, this sermon.

When it was finished, the young man fell gently backward in the chair in which all this time he had been sitting, and, except for a few convulsive twitches of his body, remained for three minutes motionless. Then he opened his eyes, seemed dazed, as if awakening from sleep, recovered himself, and asked for water.

Later in the evening, I engaged him in conversation ; but the contrast was marked—only the mind of the ordinary young man expressed itself.

In connection with this incident, there are two facts I wish to mention. One is that, during the whole of the conversation and oration, I carefully watched to see if the young man would betray him-

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self were he playing an assumed part. As I have stated, the conversation, on his side, was conducted in English, but with a very pronounced foreign accent.

Admitting the possibility that he might be an impostor, would he momentarily forget that he had to be a Hindoo, and, perchance, drop the accent?

Not once did he do so. Surely a difficult feat for an impostor—who was not a clever person—under the prolonged strain of a conversation such as I have outlined!

The other fact is this. Those present on the occasion were convinced that the young man, of himself, neither possessed the intellectual talents to conceive, nor the educational advantages to express, the thoughts embodied in his address.

I leave the reader to explain this incident by whatever hypothesis he may please.

That of *control* by some intelligence superior to the medium's own seems to me the most reasonable one.

Let us now look at the Bible's testimony concerning the fact of spirit-control.

In the Old Testament, the existence of spiritual beings, as exercising an injurious influence and control upon men and women, is distinctly declared. The term "*familiar* spirits" is a suggestive one,

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and denotes that there actually existed an intimacy between mankind and beings on the spiritual plane of life.

A few passages will be sufficient to substantiate this statement.

"Regard not them that have familiar spirits" (Lev. xix. 31 v.).

"The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits . . . I will even set my face against that soul" (Lev. xx. 6 v.).

"A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit . . . shall surely be put to death" (Lev. xx. 27 v.).

"There shall not be found among you . . . a consulter with familiar spirits" (Deut. xviii. 10 and 11 v.).

"Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits" (1 Sam. xxviii. 3 v.).

Manasseh "dealt with familiar spirits" (2 Kings xxi. 6 v.).

"The workers with familiar spirits . . . did Josiah put away" (2 Kings xxiii. 24 v.).

It is noteworthy, also, that the prophets, whose grasp of truth was so much greater than that of either priests or people, acknowledged the existence of these controlling spirits.

Thus, Isaiah writes, "The spirit of Egypt shall

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fail . . . and they shall seek to them that have familiar spirits" (Is. xix. 3 v.).

"Thy voice shall be as of one that hath a familiar spirit" (Is. xxix. 4 v.).

It is not difficult to see why, under the Mosaic Dispensation, all intercourse with these spirits was rigidly forbidden.

The Israelites, although chosen by God to play an important part in the world in making known Divine truth, had, nevertheless an ineradicable tendency towards heathen ideas and practices, in consequence, probably, of that nation's long sojourn in Egypt. These spirits, with whom association was possible, were debased spirits.

They were, I think, the spirits of men who, in earth-life, had been steeped in all the abominations of heathendom. Passing out of this life—many of them violently hurled out of it by the Israelites themselves—they found themselves in the spirit-life possessed of their old evil instincts and passions, and with a feeling of revenge, that took the form of making them wish to drag down their enemies to their own level of thought and experience. Intercourse with them, in such a case, could only result in mental and moral degradation.

The reader may ask—"Is it possible that feelings

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of revenge can actuate persons who have passed into the World of Spiritual reality? Are not such feelings dropped at the grave? Alas! no. A solemn and suggestive statement has been made by an inspired Apostle on this point. St. John clairvoyantly saw "under the altar" (a Hebrew term for "Paradise") the souls of them that were *slain* for their allegiance to truth. "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and *avenge our blood* on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. vi. 10 v.).

It seems to me particularly significant that "white robes" (emblematic of Christ-like character) were given unto everyone of them; and that the possibility of their advancing to a nobler and grander tone of thought, is implied in the command that "they should *rest yet for a little season.*"

We turn, now, to the New Testament for testimony as to spirits possessing a power to control mankind. Its testimony is far and away more emphatic than that of the Old Testament. Under the very eyes of Christ Himself, spirits exercised a baneful control, not only over the minds of men and women, but also over their bodies.

I submit a very important question (touching the very vitals of Christian faith, viz, the reliability of

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Christ as a Teacher of truth) to those who deny the fact of spiritual-control. He, in His speech and action, treated the subject of spirit-control as if it were *a fact.* If it were not a fact, how do you reconcile with the belief that He was a Divine Teacher those words and actions of Him? Are you prepared to say that He was merely adapting Himself to a popular and erroneous idea? If so, had you not better re-cast your conceptions of Him and His teaching? For my own part, I prefer to believe that Christ would never have countenanced a prevalent idea unless it had been true.

The following are some of the statements of the New Testament.

Christ met two persons possessed with a number of evil spirits, who spoke to Him through the vocal organs of the men, and showed their debased, earth-bound condition by asking to go away into a heard of swine (Matt. viii. 28–32 v.).

In the synagogue, an unclean spirit cried out through the man he was controlling, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?" "And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and *come out of him*" (Mark i. 23–26 v.).

"He (Jesus) cast out many devils" (δαιμόνια, *i.e.*, spiritual beings, not necessarily evil, but so in this

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case), "and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him" (Mark i. 34 v.). "Unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God" (Mark iii. 11 v.).

Upon descending from the scene of Transfiguration, Christ saw a poor lad under the physical control of a malicious spirit that tare him, and made him fall on the ground and wallow foaming. Christ bade this spirit come out of him and enter no more *into him.* The control is described as a "*dumb* and *deaf* spirit," showing that he only exercised a partial control; he could not use the physical vocal organs and ears of his victim, as many other controls could (Mark ix. 25 v.).

"In that same hour, He (Jesus) cured many of their infirmities and plagues and of *evil spirits*" (Luke vii. 21 v.).

"Certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits . . . Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils (δαιμόνια) (Luke viii. 2 v.).

"He cast out the spirits with his word" (Matt. viii. 16 v.).

"Devils (δαιμόνια) also came out of many, crying out and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God" (Luke iv. 41 v.).

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If you accept as truthful these statements of men, who were hearers and eye-witnesses of what Christ said and did, can you put any interpretation upon these passages other than that of actual spirit-control?

Is it conceivable that Christ could have acted and spoken as if spirits were present if they had not been there? Surely such conduct would have been a solemn farce! Nor is this all. He committed to His disciples a "power against unclean spirits, to cast them out," and they exerted that power and "returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils (δαιμόνια) are subject unto us through Thy name." Were He and they victims of a fevered imagination?

Again, the Pharisees most illogically charged Him with casting out devils "by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." How did He meet their charge? By acknowledging that He did *what they alleged*, but "by the Spirit of God." He showed the terrible possibility of an ejected unclean spirit returning to a man and finding its house empty of God, swept of goodness and garnished for an influx of evil. "Then (said Christ) goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in (*i. e.*, the man) and dwell there;

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and the last state of that man is worse than the first" (Matt. xii. 43–45 v.).

All this goes to show that our Lord had knowledge of, and admitted, the fact of spirit-control.

Lastly, there are two instances of spirit-control recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

A certain damsel—a money-making medium under control—followed Paul and others, crying, "These men are servants of the most high God." St. Paul (clairvoyant like his Master and the Seers) was grieved, not because the girl acknowledged a truth, but because he could see that she was under an undesirable physical control. He "turned and said *to the spirit*—I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. And he came out the same hour" (Acts xvi. 16–18 v.).

Certain exorcists took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, and an evil spirit in a man present so physically controlled the man that he leaped upon and overcame the exorcists, causing them to flee naked and wounded (Acts xix. 13–16 v.).

The whole of the Bible's testimony on this point is, I contend, false, misleading and highly absurd if spirit-control be not a fact.

Those who know (and there are many who do

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know) that spirit-control is no less an experience of mankind now than it was of old, have no need to cast about them for ingenious hypotheses to explain away the statements of Scripture.

(E). *The greater number of spiritual manifestations recorded in Scripture took place amid the ordinary surroundings of earthly life.*

We consider this a very important point in its bearing upon the subject of the commingling of the Spiritual and the physical. And for this reason. Did the Bible show that mankind has had no experiences of the Spiritual, except under extraordinary conditions, whereby ordinary earthly surroundings and concerns were lost sight of for the time being, and the mind and feelings were worked up to a state of nervous excitation, then there would, in that case, be grounds for questioning—(*a*) whether the experiences were anything more than *subjective*, *i. e.*, mental impressions induced by an overwrought imagination; or (*b*) whether, granting the manifestations to be *objective*, there was proved anything more than the existence of a Spiritual World somewhere or another outside the limits of the physical. I do not think experiences of the kind just mentioned necessarily indicate the penetration of the Spiritual into the physical. Take the ex-

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perience of St. Paul who entered the third sphere of Paradise before his body died, and that of St. Stephen who, at the time of his martrydom, saw Christ. These unique experiences demonstrate the possibility of a man's spirit projecting itself into a World that is not physical; but no more. They show that spirit and spirit may come into contact, but they do not show that spirit (other than that within the man himself) is living and energising in the very midst of physical environment.

Were all spiritual experiences of precisely the same character as those two of St. Paul and St. Stephen, we should be compelled to admit that, possibly, the Spiritual and the physical are detached and widely-separated planes of life and do not overlap.

But the case is otherwise. The Bible shows that numbers of men and women perceived the Spiritual, not on account of their interior spirit-part going out (as it were) to a World external to the physical, but because that World was close beside them. It was a part of their environment.

One has only to examine the Bible narratives to see that, in most instances, no efforts were made by the persons to put themselves *en rapport* with the super-physical. No monastic cells, nor hermit's

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caves were sought after (as in later ages), in order that all earthly thoughts, concerns and occupations might be laid aside, and a mental and religious atmosphere, supposed to be congenial to the Spiritual, created. No, these spiritual manifestations came when they were not expected, in a way that suggests nothing unnatural. They approached and mingled themselves with the commonplace objects of mundane surroundings.

The sacred writers, too, recount what happened, not as if an astonishingly startling event had taken place—as modern writers tell a ghost-story—but in a matter-of-fact and unsensational manner, as men would do who know that the Spiritual, although super-physical, is not *supernatural.*

Thus we gather that spirit can live and move, not only within our own bodies, but also in the midst of, and in close association with a world of matter; and hence we conclude that two worlds commingle.

I turn to the Bible for the sanction of these statements.

Abraham was resting himself, in the heat of the day at his tent door, when three spiritual beings stood by him.

Lot was sitting, as the day was waning, at the gate of Sodom, when the two angels approached,

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who, declining his offer of shelter, told him they would abide in *the street* all night.

Jacob was on a journey, engrossed with the bustle consequent upon the departure of himself, his servants and belongings from Laban, when the angels of God met him on the road.

Moses was in a wilderness, tending sheep, when a double spiritual manifestation was vouchsafed to him. He saw an angel and a super-physical fire in the midst of a bush.

Balaam was riding along a highway, expecting no spiritual intervention, when an angel stood in a pathway between two walls in order to bar his progress.

Joshua was making a military survey in the neighbourhood of Jericho, when "the Captain of the Lord's host" stood over against him.

Gideon was threshing wheat when an angel sat under an oak and spoke to him.

Elijah was sleeping under a juniper tree when an angel touched, aroused and spoke to him.

Elisha and his young man were out of doors, conversing about a threatened danger to the prophet, when a neighbouring mountain became the scene of a spiritual manifestation.

Belshazzar was feasting, drinking and rioting in his banqueting hall, when a spiritual being

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partly materialised, and wrote on the plaister of the wall.

Zacharias was performing his ordinary duty when an angel stood on the right side of the altar of incense.

A peasant Woman was in her home at Nazareth when the same angel entered the dwelling and saluted her as the future mother of the Saviour.

Shepherds at night-time were sleepily and tediously watching their flocks when an angel stood in their midst.

Sorrowing women visited Christ's sepulchre to perform a gentle office, and saw two spirits standing in the place. ("Two *men* in shining garments.")

On a mountain-top (Olivet), the same two spirits, probably, ("two *men* in white apparel") stood and addressed the wondering disciples.

In an upper-room at Jerusalem tongues of spiritual fire sat upon physical heads.

While St. Peter was sleeping in a prison, an angel came there and touched, aroused and spoke to him.

Away on the open sea, an angel stood on board ship and imparted a message to St. Paul.

These are but some of many such statements, and

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if we accept them as records of truth, I submit that we have no alternative but to believe that the great World of Spirit extends everywhere, and that its life, power and intelligence interpenetrate the physical, and are moving and energising even amid the ordinary surroundings of earthly existence.

Some of the Characteristics of the Spiritual World

The reader who has carefully and thoughtfully read the foregoing pages, will, probably, surmise that the limits of our investigation have not yet been reached, and that other truths concerning the Spiritual World, possibly overlooked by many, may lie crystallised in the pages of Holy Writ.

We think that to be the case, and now proceed to consider some of those truths.

We are told sometimes that it is, and ever will be, impossible for us, on this side of the grave, to know anything about the *details* of spirit existence. We do not admit that this is so; but even supposing it to be the case, we submit that a very great deal, at all events, may be known from the Bible as to the *leading characteristics* of the World Beyond. However ignorant we may be of the personal surround-

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ings of beings in that World, we may discover the general principles that underlie their life there. The details connected with the working out of those principles may be hidden from us, but the principles themselves are not. To realise as much as this is surely an enormous gain on a religious agnosticism that avows that everything concerning the Spiritual World is veiled in impenetrable cloud and uncertainty. Not to know the other is, after all, of comparatively little importance.

Did I, for example, know that my son is in another part of the world alive and well cared for, and that he is being educated in an establishment whose system is so excellent that all that is good in the boy would surely be developed, I should not worry myself and be impatient because I do not perhaps know all about the details of his school-life. Knowing the general principles under which he is living, I should be satisfied. The boy can tell me all the rest when I go to see him. But ignorance of the system with which he is associated would, if I loved my son, be intolerable.

By the same reasoning, I assert that we can bear to be in ignorance of the immediate surroundings and occupations of dear ones who have passed into the Spirit-World, but we cannot bear (unless we be

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apathetic) not to know aught regarding the *principles* of the system of life under which they live. It is this conventional idea—that nothing can possibly be known of what lies beyond the veil—that invests death with such unutterable horror to thousands who profess to believe that "the sting" has been removed.

"I am so glad to see you in this terrible time of my trouble," said a young widow to the clergyman who had called upon her a few days after the funeral of her husband. "You will be able to tell me what I do so much want to know. I believe that my dear one is still alive, and I feel convinced that he thinks of me and loves me as he did on earth. I feel convinced, moreover, that all the good in him will expand and mature, and that those things which perplexed him here, because he could not seem to understand them, although he went to church and thought about them, will not perplex him now. I have the idea that God will lead him to understand them where he is. Am I right? You have studied the Bible; tell me, does it sanction these beautiful thoughts?"

"Madam," was the reply, "the Bible tells us nothing of what is after death, except that one day there will be a resurrection and a great judgment, and a final Heaven or Hell."

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"You are not sure, then," queried the lady, "whether my dear husband is now even *alive?*"

"No," answered the clergyman, "he may be; but the Bible is very silent on the subject."

"Then," rejoined the lady, "you can take your Bible away; I don't want it; it is no good to me; it fails me at the point I most need light, comfort and assurance; it does not meet my case. If it be as you say, I will trust God and my own heart rather than it."

We venture to tell a good many clergymen of the type of the one just instanced that, unless they open their eyes to perceive the truths that the Bible really does teach, there will be hundreds of thousands in their flocks, who will hold aloof from them and their attenuated teaching and think for themselves. We declare it to be untrue that the Bible is very silent on the subject of Life beyond the grave. That grand old Book discloses much over and above the bare fact of continued existence there.

It tells us—

I.—That the Spiritual is a World of wide-differing life and experience.

That is a truth but rarely grasped. The common idea of the Spiritual World is, that it consists of

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two circumscribed areas, marked off somewhere in far-away space; one of which areas is allotted to the spirits of good people, and the other to the spirits of wicked ones. When a person departs this life, it is imagined that he goes into one or other of those localities, and there enters upon a life and experience that is stereotyped and uniform for all in that particular division. There, among the good or bad, he finds himself in the midst of an environment that never varies. All the beings with whom his lot is cast are thought to have precisely the same character, the same experiences, to possess the same ideas, and to do (if they do anything at all) the same things. In that place, it is supposed, he will remain, leading an aimless existence in a long anticipation of bliss or misery, until the final Judgment shall declare his destiny of Heaven or Hell.

Consequently, to a healthy mind, the Intermediate Life is presented as about as undesirable a Life as it is possible to conceive: a dull, sleepy, workless, and half-alive condition; a place to be quiet in, and do nothing but dream of future "beatific visions" or awful pains.

The marvel to me is how those who profess to have these notions can think it possible that any

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being, after a century of such experiences, could maintain a vestige of his manhood or sanity.

Nothing more clearly shows how deeply rooted is this idea of the fixed and unalterable uniformity and aimlessness of the Life after death, than the horror felt by many at the suggestion that we should still continue to pray for those who have gone into that Life. To numbers it appears a superstitious absurdity to speak to the great loving Father-God about a dear departed one.

I know some good people who would not be half so shocked at your slandering a neighbour, or doing him some other wrong, as they would be if you prayed for him after his decease.

But why, we ask, a little indignantly, is it absurd and reprehensible to pray for the departed? "Why?" is the rejoinder, "what possible good can we do the dead by praying for them?" To this we answer—"None whatever, if they be *dead* things, or drowsy, inactive, trance-like entities, fixed in an unalterable environment; but a great deal of good—depend upon it—if they are *living* men and women, capable of thinking, working and acting, and expanding into something better and nobler." And it is just because we are convinced that our departed are living, and are leading real

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lives, and not droning out a monotonous existence on the dead-level of a paralysing uniformity, that we absolutely refuse to believe that our unselfish prayers for them are either un-Christian or un-Scriptural.

If poor lost souls in the World Beyond were not out of the reach and concern of a loving Saviour, (and St. Peter shows they were not), why, in the name of common sense, should it be wrong for us to pray for others who may be in the same condition?

Methinks I hear the objector say, "There is not one text in the Bible that bids you offer such prayers." "Quite true," we answer, "but what of that? There is no text that commands us to baptize little children, or to read a Burial-Service over dead bodies, or to build churches, and hold Festivals and Saints' Days; but we do these things, nevertheless."

When will some Christians learn that the Bible only gives us broad, grand principles to guide us in our thought and conduct, and assumes that Christ-like instinct and sanctified common sense will suggest the rest?

Had men but a better grasp of the truth concerning the World of Spirit, we should hear no

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more of the foolish outcry that prayers for the departed are dreadfully wicked and essentially Popish. If the Roman Church has piled up a mass of Mediæval rubbish upon a beautiful and Christ-like practice, sweep away the rubbish, but do not get rid of the practice. He is not a skilful surgeon who cuts off a man's leg to get rid of an abscess upon it; nor is he a wise teacher who, in order to remove an incrustation of error, clears away the truth that lies beneath.

Those who pray for the departed have a far worthier concepton of the Life Beyond than those who think that the voice of supplication must cease with the dying breath, and that Death will seal the ears of God against our cry for a blessing on dear ones who "*live* unto Him."

Before we turn to the Bible to show that it does not teach uniformity of life and experience in the Spiritual World, let us briefly refer to two considerations that point to this conclusion.

(*a*) The impossibility of imagining that persons, on leaving this life, can be rigidly divided into only these two classes of good and bad.

We are confronted with facts, and it is well that we should honestly look them in the face. What are they? First, that not one in every ten thousand

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persons departing this life can either be designated as altogether good or altogether bad. Between those extremes lies an infinite variety of characters that approach nearly, less nearly, distantly or more distantly, either goodness or wickedness.

Here is a man who is not wholly good, inasmuch as he has some bad qualities and habits. Here is another, not wholly bad, since at times he can act rightly and even nobly. To which division, at death, are we to assign each of these men? Do we mentally put them (as it were) into a scale that will measure their moral worth, and as the good or bad in them predominates, assign them a place in one of the two divisions?

In that case, what will happen to those (and there are millions of them) whose character at death is in a state of equipoise between good and bad? Does it accord with the fitness of things that such persons should be herded with those in whom goodness has been all but extinguished, or, on the other hand, should they be made, although unfitted for the experience, to consort with saints?

How, for instance, will those who only think of two classes in the Spiritual World—viz, the good and the bad, the saved and the unsaved—argue in respect to the following case—a true one?

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Not long ago, on a very rainy day, a large vessel, laden with oranges, was discharging her cargo at one of the quays near London Bridge, and a number of porters were carrying the boxes of fruit across a plank stretched from the vessel to the quay. Lounging on the quay was a disreputable, drunken fellow, too lazy to work, and bad enough to disgust the dock-labourers. There he stood, watching the operations, and making foul remarks to the toilers as they passed and repassed him. Suddenly there was a cry. A poor fellow had slipped on the wet plank, and fallen into the water. An instant later the swift current had swept him out into midstream. Without a moment's hesitation, the drunken loafer dashed the short clay pipe from his mouth, flung off his ragged coat, plunged into the river, and, after a desperate struggle, succeeded in reaching the drowning man, and kept him from sinking until a boat reached them, and both were rescued in an unconscious condition.

Now suppose that loafer had lost his life in his magnificent effort to save a fellow-creature who was nothing to him, to where, I ask, would the commonly accepted teaching have consigned him? The so-called "orthodox" system only gives the choice of two places. Would his spirit have risen

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from the muddy Thames to go among the good in Paradise? He, the drunken, dissolute man, would have been out of place with the ones there, and as for imagining that faith and good character were acquired by him in his death-struggle, what if he had known nothing at all about Christianity, and in the act of dying had been too busy to think of anything except saving a fellow-creature's life!

Would his spirit then have gone among the bad, to that place regarded as the awful and hopeless ante-chamber, and waiting-room of an everlasting Hell? Such a thought ought to shock any Christian whose moral sense has not been blunted and drugged by long familiarity with a cruel doctrine invented in a hard and fierce age.

Had that loafer died before the boat reached him, he would have done what many who go to Church or Chapel, and count themselves "the elect," would not have done. If he was a child of the devil in his life, he was very much like Christ in his death.

Where, we ask again, will the theorists who regard the Spiritual World as only two waiting-places for a future of weal or woe, determined at death, place that man? It will do violence to their creed if they put him among the blessed. It is an

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abominable thought that one in whom the Christ-spirit is energising should have no other prospect than Hell.

Our friends are in a moral difficulty. It does not confront us who can conceive of varied life and experience in the World Beyond. We can believe that that disreputable loafer, who dared to do what the loving, beautiful Saviour did, would go, after death, not into a cruel and remorseless sphere of inexorable destiny, but into a department of the Spiritual World where He Who came not "to destroy men's lives, but to save them," and Who declared that He will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, will, unless He is *not* "the same yesterday and to-day and forever," most certainly go after the poor lost sheep to raise him to something better.

But that could not be so, on the supposition that there are only two divisions and two classes in the Spiritual World: in the one, none but those ready and waiting for Heaven, and in the other, only the hopelessly doomed ones expectant of Hell.

Let us pass to the other consideration that points to varied life and experience after death.

(*b*) The difficulty of supposing that persons on leaving this life can have, in the face of the intel-

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lectual, moral and spiritual dissimilarity that exists, a *uniform* experience beyond.

How can there, we ask, be a uniform experience either of pleasure and happiness, or of pain and misery in either of *two* spheres of Spiritual existence, unless in mind, character and spiritual condition the ones who enter those spheres are constituted alike? Even were all outwardly conditioned the same, variety in character and mental and spiritual capabilities must necessitate a wide dissimilarity in experience.

Place two persons here on earth amid the same surroundings, let us say, for example, in a delightful country spot. It will by no means follow that the experiences of both will be similar. One may be an intense lover of the country, and a thoughtful observer and student of nature. The other may have cultivated no tastes and desires, except such as pertain to town-life. To the one man the country surroundings will be a delight, an inspiration, a means of expanding the internal resources he possesses; to the other they will be uninteresting, dull and irksome.

On the same principle we argue that the one who has lived out his earthly life without cultivating a love for God and spiritual things, would be as un-

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able to *suddenly* appreciate and enjoy spiritual realities of a high order, as a schoolboy, who has just learned the four first letters of the Greek alphabet, would be to find a delight in the classics.

Now, the general notion is that there are two departments of Intermediate Life, and a particular set of surroundings for each department, and, moreover, a particular set of experiences common to all in that department.

Thus it is assumed that the man who has never cultivated his mind and spirit—*e. g.*, the drunkard and wife-beater who repents on his death-bed—will go directly after death into the immediate Presence of his Saviour and will live with the saints, and become absorbed in the contemplation and enjoyment of heavenly things; because St. Paul who went to the abode of the saved spoke of dying as a gain, and went to be with Christ. Again, it has been confidently taught that the irreligious man drowned by the capsising of a boat (provided he has not been suddenly converted as he chokes in the water—an idea, by the way, that finds no sanction in Scripture) will assuredly go into a place of awful pain and remorse; because selfish Dives was shown to be so circumstanced after he left this world.

It never seems to strike some that surroundings

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that are possible and suitable to St. Paul and other developed Christians may be impossible, and certainly would be most unsuitable, to an ex-wife-beater and others whose characters have not been moulded, and who are but "*babes*" in Christ.

Dives went into the right place to unlearn his selfishness and to learn a concern for others, but it does not follow that his experience would be proper for another, who, although irreligious, might not be selfish.

Thus, we believe that, even if it could be shown that everybody's everlasting destiny is unalterably fixed at death (and I have never yet been able to discover that doctrine in the Bible), and even if it could be shown that the saved have but one spiritual environment, common to all, yet, we contend, their experiences in that environment would be wholly different. The relationship of some towards it would be unlike that of others. To the man or woman of moulded character and expanded nature, it would be what to others of unmoulded, or less moulded, character it could not be.

That is why, I think, our Lord and the Bible-writers laid such enormous stress upon character, and, seemingly, such little stress upon mere theological opinions. Their rebukes and condemnations

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were reserved for those who acted wrongly, rather than those who thought erroneously. The severest words that ever fell from the lips of Jesus Christ were launched against the "orthodox" Pharisees.

Nor is it difficult to see the reason of this. Knowing the all-important part that character plays in forming and complexioning our life and experience in the World Beyond, Christ and those who were taught by Him placed the cultivation of character before all else. They knew that one flash of Divine light after death might set a man right whose theological ideas were wrong, if his conduct had been true and Christ-like; but that no amount of mental illumination could suddenly transform a neglected, or warped, or misshapen nature into one *en rapport* with that which is spiritually grand and beautiful.

What a wealth of meaning and hope (so generally unsuspected) underlies those magnificent words of the Saviour, "If any man will do His will he *shall know* of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (John vii. 17 v.). Think over those words. They embody a Gospel-message that half the Gospel-preachers have missed.

The testimony of the Bible as to differing life and experience beyond.

Can we, in turning to Scripture, find enough in

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its statements to justify us in making the foregoing conclusion? We think we can. Let us examine some of those statements; bearing in mind that it is rather to the New Testament (as containing writings penned after the advent of the Truth-Revealer) than to the Old Testament we shall look for anything like particulars concerning the Spiritual World.

First, let us notice that the *general principle* of variety in life and experience as regards spiritual existence is declared by the Bible. That book shows that one great class of spiritual beings, viz, angels, are not on a common level of moral excellence and dignity, and consequently must have different experiences.

David referred to angels "that *excel* in strength" (Ps. ciii. 20 v.); St. Paul, to "*elect* angels" (1 Tim. v. 21 v.); another writer to "angels that *sinned*" (2 Peter ii. 4 v.); St. Jude, to "angels which kept not their first estate" (*their own principality*), "but left their own habitation" (*their proper habitation*) (6 v.).

Our Lord, in pointing out the sin and danger of despising little children, gave, as a reason, their sanctity in having as spiritual guardians those who are closest to God.

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"In heaven, their angels do *always behold the face of my Father*" (Matt. xviii. 10 v.).

When the old man Zacharias was incredulous concerning what the angel told him, and asked, "Whereby shall I know this?" Gabriel pointed him to the fact of his extraordinary dignity, as a guarantee of his truthfulness—"I am Gabriel, *that stand in the presence of God*" (Luke i. 19 v.).

We submit, therefore, that these qualifying clauses imply that *some*, and not all, angels "excel"; that not all "have sinned," nor have all "left their proper habitation," nor do all "always behold the face of the Father." In other words, they point to various spiritual conditions, environments, and experiences, in the ranks of angel-hood.

Now, putting aside for a moment all other statements of Scripture, we consider that such passages as the above, not only negative the idea of uniformity in regard to angel-life, but also afford a reason for believing also that men on the plane of spirit, after death, will have widely-differing surroundings and experiences.

Angel-nature, although a higher development of spirit-life than that pertaining to man after he has left this world, is nevertheless the same as the latter in kind. Both they and he are non-physical, and

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are spiritual beings encased in spirit-bodies, adapted for a Spiritual World. Our Lord's words justify us in presupposing this *constitutional* likeness between angel and man. Speaking of man's ultimate destiny, He stated that he will be "*equal* unto the angels" (Luke xx. 36 v.); which were impossible were these classes of creatures dissimilar in constitution and, consequently, in resources and powers.

Now, we ask if there exists variety in the environment and experience of angels, is it at all likely that it will *not* exist, in regard to man, when he steps into the spiritual world? Then he will be on a lower platform of life than the angels. Shall we look for uniformity of thought, character and experience among earth's departed millions, whom we know to be so dissimilar, and not find it even among the angels? Is that quite reasonable—to view it as characterising a lower phase of spirit-life and not the higher one? Surely that would be a reversal of the proper order of things. The reader may object that it is useless to draw any inferences in regard to man from angels, because the angels are so wholly different from us. Not so different, we think, as is generally imagined. Two rather big assumptions are made by most theologians concerning angels.

The first is that, of course, they are all (except the

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lost angels) in *heaven*, in the immediate Presence of the Almighty, and the next that they were all created as angels, without any previous existence and education.

We believe both assumptions to be wrong.

The Bible shows that there are exalted angelic intelligences very near to God; but it also implies that there are others less exalted, and not so near Him.

As to angels having been called into existence as such, it is, to say the least of it, exceedingly improbable. Moral and spiritual excellence in creatures is a quality that is, as far as we know, only produced by education, experience and growth. Even Christ Himself, we read, was made "*perfect* through sufferings." We believe that God's *modus operandi* in regard to man, in bringing him to the goal of his being, is the principle under which He has worked in respect to angels. Man starts his existence on the plane of the physical; from that he presently rises to a higher plane, the Spiritual; and from the latter he will go on with his education, until he ultimately reaches the destination for which God made him—the plane of the Celestial—the Heaven of the Gospel. So we believe it is in the case of angels. We think that they too started their being on some plane of

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the physical—upon some of the millions of material worlds dotted in space. From these (not necessarily by death) they rose to the Spiritual, and onward and upward to the Celestial.

Some of them, we think, have reached their goal; others are still rising, and others in the Spirit-world are at an altitude where men and angels meet.

But between a Gabriel and other angels may exist as much a spiritual distinction as between St. Paul and St. John, who have been spiritually growing in the Intermediate World for centuries, and ourselves, were we now transplanted there.

The New Testament distinctly affirms the fact of there being different phases of life and experience after death.

This is a point that is readily admitted by Christians so far as it concerns the great class distinction between those in the Intermediate Life who are in a condition of saving faith, and those who are not; but it is not so readily admitted in regard to persons considered *individually* in either one of these classes. It is seen that the experience of Lazarus after death was radically different from that of the selfish rich man, but it is not generally seen that this does not involve that *all* on Lazarus's side of the gulf of moral separation are similarly circumstanced, nor that *all*

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Dives's side are undergoing the experience that he did. In the World of Spirit there may be dissimilarity in the life and experiences of those belonging to either group of believer or unbeliever, of blessed or unblessed; and we believe the New Testament points to it.

Take our Lord's words, uttered towards the close of His earthly ministry. They are very suggestive. Speaking to His disciples, whom He appointed to teach mankind, He said, "In my Father s house are many mansions" (Greek: πολλαί μοναί, *i. e.*, many tarrying or abiding-places); "if it were not so I would have told you" (John xiv. 2 v.). Now the usual interpretation put upon those words is that Christ was only referring to *Heaven*.

Suppose we admit this (which we do not), what then? His statement most certainly demolishes the "orthodox" idea of uniform life and experience in Heaven. There are "*many* mansions," He says; and the life and experience of one household is different from that of another. So then we can claim a divine sanction for even more than we asserted, viz, that there is not a uniformity of experience even among the angels and saints in Heaven itself.

But did Christ by this phrase, "My Father's house," only refer to Heaven? We do not think He did. We

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ask where is the Father's house? Can you localise it in any spot of the universe? Are not both the Spiritual and Physical World as much a part of it as Heaven? Did not the Christ Himself speak of the temple of Jerusalem as "My Father's house"? (John ii. 16 v.). Did not St. Paul also call the Christian Church "the house of God"? (1 Tim. iii. 15 v.). Are we, in the face of this, justified in restricting the term to Heaven? When St. Paul departed this life "to be with Christ," and entered the Spirit-World to wait for "the redemption of the body" (Rom. iii. 23 v.), were the Saviour and he outside the Father s house? If not, then the point for which we contend must be conceded; for, on Christ's own showing, it is a house of many tarrying places.

I beg you also to notice the significance of the words, "If it were not so, I would have told you." Do they not imply that Christ viewed it as a foregone conclusion that man should picture future spiritual life and experience as multiform?

Look now at some of the statements of the New Testament concerning those who are shown as being, after death, in the Spiritual World—the Intermediate Life. Those statements do not countenance the idea of uniform life and experience. Both classes—blessed and unblessed—are referred to, and

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in either class the experience of one person is seen to be different from that of another.

We remind the reader that in the cases we shall instance none of the persons were either in Heaven or Hell, but in the Intermediate World. Neither the resurrection nor the final Judgment had taken place.

The New Testament refers to the following as being among the blessed in the Intermediate Life, viz, Moses, Elijah, Lazarus, the beggar, and the Souls "under the altar."

Were their spheres of life and experience alike? Moses and Elijah, in consequence of their long sojourn in the World of Spirit, had so developed that they were able to figure in a magnificent scene of glory on Mount Hermon, and to converse with the Saviour on the most momentous of all subjects —"His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."

Lazarus, the poor beggar, was shown to be after death in a state of rest and relief, but no more. He was in "Abraham's bosom," but not a hint is given that he was capable of the mental and spiritual experiences of Moses and Elijah.

The souls "under the altar" show, by their impatience and un-Christ-like demand for vengeance, that, although they were among the blessed, their

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spiritual education was far from completed. They had neither the restfulness of Lazarus nor the spiritual knowledge of Moses and Elijah.

Again, the New Testament has statements as to what was to be the experience of two persons who were going into the Intermediate Life—the penitent robber and St. Paul. The penitent robber, whose character and spiritual nature was as yet unformed, was told by the loving Saviour that he should be with him in Paradise on the day of crucifixion, and there, doubtless, he listened to Christ's preaching of the Gospel to the Antediluvians, whose physical bodies perished in the Flood. But we cannot suppose that that robber was on the same platform of moral and spiritual thought and experience as either Moses or Elijah, or the martyred Christians, or the beggar Lazarus.

St. Paul was convinced that his departure from the physical world into the Spiritual would enable him to be more nearly "with Christ," but surely we must imagine that his communion and intercourse with Jesus was of a far higher character than that of the robber. The Presence of Christ to St. Paul, the man of noble self-sacrifice and spiritual insight, must have meant infinitely more than it did at first to the man who had never loved nor served

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Him, and had cursed Him to His face within a few minutes of dying.

There are other persons referred to in the New Testament as being at the time in an unblessed condition, viz, the rich man of the parable, the Antediluvians, and those whom Christ said should go into "outer darkness."

The condition and experience of these were wholly dissimilar. Dives, through the ordeal of painful discipline, was beginning to learn the lesson of unselfishness.

The Antediluvians, whatever may have been their past experiences in the Intermediate Life, at all events were not, at the time our Lord preached His Gospel to them, any longer in a state of rebellion against God. St. Peter describes them as those "which *sometime* were disobedient" (1 Peter iii. 20 v.), implying that the judgment of God and the discipline of spirit-life had brought them to repentance, and made it possible for them to accept the Gospel message and "live according to God in the spirit" (1 Peter iv. 6 v.).

Their condition, then, was clearly different from that of the rich man in Hades. The gulf of moral and spiritual dissimilarity that separated him from Lazarus in Abraham's bosom did not exist in the

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case of the Antediluvians and the Christ in Paradise. Schooled by their long stay in the Spiritual World, these old-time sinners had learned better things. No longer disobedient and insensible to God and goodness, the gulf between the blessed and unblessed was no longer impassable; Jesus from Paradise could go to them and win them for Himself.

Again the condition and experience of those described by Christ as going into "outer darkness" (Matt. viii. 12 v.), is plainly wholly unlike that of either the Antediluvians or Dives. These "*children of the kingdom*," in the earth-life, had had the light and the opportunities which the Antediluvians had not had, and had wilfully closed their eyes to the one, and not used the other.

In the Life Beyond, they were worse off than the wretched beings drowned by the Flood, and the rich man in his "*testings*" in Hades. God-given faculties, neglected and disused, had atrophied in them. They had lost their power of perceiving the light of goodness and truth, and for a while, at least, their sphere in spirit-life was the "outer darkness." Testimony has been borne by persons who have departed this life, and been seen by survivors, that their experience on first entering the

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Spirit-World was a very terrible one. The Saviour's words were true; they could see nothing. An awful, impenetrable darkness surrounded them.

There remains still another statement of the New Testament, at which we must briefly glance, in connection with this phase of our subject.

It relates to St. Paul's unique experience in having entered Paradise before the axe of cruel Nero had finally severed his connection with his physical body.

The Apostle recounts the experience in 2 Cor. xii. 2–4 v., and tells us that he, the real man—so real, indeed, that for all he knew to the contrary he might have been in his earthly body—"was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words" (4 v.).

But note the point. St. Paul states that he went to "the *third* heaven" or sphere.

What is the logical conclusion? Surely that there are at least *three* distinct spheres of life and experience in the Paradise of the Spiritual World. And if so, then this one statement, to say nothing of the others adduced, justifies our assertion that God's Book teaches that the World Beyond is one of differing life and experience. Again, therefore, are the Bible and common sense seen to be hand in hand.

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II.—In the Spiritual World, the experiences of both believer and unbeliever are complexioned by, and correspond to, the character formed in earth-life.

A certain teaching, supposed by thousands to be "orthodox," practically minimises the importance of cultivating character in the earth-life. In some cases, at all events, that teaching shows that the non-formation of character is of no vital consequence to Life Beyond, provided a person has repented and exercised faith *before* he breathes his last; and that the after-experience is in no way complexioned by the earth-life, however misspent, if that earth-life be finished by one great act of repentance and faith.

Let us look a little more closely, and see what is radically and dangerously wrong about such teaching.

In the first place, the commonly-accepted theology recognises—and quite rightly so—the great difference in condition after death between one who dies as a believer in Christ, and another who goes hence as an unbeliever. Faith connects a person with the Saviour; consequently, the one enters the Spiritual World in a "state of salvation," while the other is not in that state. So far we agree. We

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regard the salvation of the human race as being indissolubly bound up with our Lord Jesus Christ. Nay, more; we regard Christ as far more precious to mankind than most of the theologies represent Him as being. Not only is He the Cause of our everlasting *happiness*, but the Sole Cause of our *immortality*. We believe that no human being, unless he in this world, or Beyond, be connected with Christ will ever attain perfection and blessedness, or live forever. We think His words, "I am the *Life*" and "I am the Vine," and St. Paul's statement that Christ "*only* (as an essential of His being) hath immortality" (1 Tim. vi. 16 v.), proclaim a truth that the Church in later ages has overlooked. We take those statements as declaring that immortality is not a quality inborn in our nature, but is a *gift* conferred through Christ, and that man's spirit, although it survives bodily dissolution, is not capable of living for ever, except by a superadded power drawn from Him who *gives* eternal life.

Consequently, there is and must be, a vital distinction, in the World of Spirit, between one who has gone there as a Christian, and another who is not in relationship with Christ; as much difference as that which exists between a traveller who has actually started on the only highway that leads to a

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desired goal, and him, who, as yet, has not even struck the track.

But at this point we are compelled to part company with popular theology. To us it seems to be altogether at variance with reason and moral law and order. Not only does it teach that the everlasting destiny of every soul—including those hundreds of millions of handicapped ones—is unalterably fixed at dying, but it asserts that anyone, debased and vile in his life, will be at no disadvantage Beyond, if he has but exercised faith a moment *before* the breath leaves his body. That postponed and solitary act of faith (too often the outcome of fear) is alleged, not only to connect him with the saving Christ (which it does, if sincere), but also to instantaneously give him a character which five minutes before had not existed, and to constitute him, morally and spiritually, the equal of those in the Spiritual World, who, for years and years, by the training of God, had been ripening on earth for Paradise.

When we are assured that the moral and spiritual condition of a brutal wife-murderer, who repented half an hour before his execution, is of so exalted a character immediately after death as to put all earthly saints in the shade, we feel inclined to ask whether it be not a huge mistake to let the hangman hurl so

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excellent a creature out of a world where goodness is so much wanted.

On two grounds we oppose this teaching that allows it to be imagined that a neglect of character can be compensated for merely by delayed acts of repentance and faith.

First, it presents an insufficient idea of salvation. Next, it is a doctrine that is morally dangerous. As to the first. What is salvation? Too commonly it is supposed to be merely the pardon of sin, the avoidance of the punishment that sin entails, and a future admission into Heaven. "Evangelical" theology practically summarises salvation in this way.

The cultivation of character is assigned a secondary position. It is not viewed as a fundamental of salvation. Of course, it is accounted a right and proper thing; a thing to be practised by Christians; but it is not regarded as a *sine quâ non*—an indispensable condition—of being saved. Salvation itself, it is taught, essentially consists of what we have just now mentioned, and the formation of character may, in some cases, at all events, be dispensed with.

Numbers of Christian teachers confidently assure a very bad man that, as soon as he repents and believes, he *is saved*. We, on the contrary, think he

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has only then taken the first step towards it. Were that man to die an hour after his conversion, some would tell us he would certainly go direct to Heaven, or, at all events, to a World where all he would have to do would be to wait for the blessedness in store for him.

If one suggests that the man's moral and spiritual development is so low that he would scarcely be suitable for Heaven-life, the answer at once is that the dying act of faith adjusts all that. Thus, according to such teachers, if a converted rascal is fortunate enough to die immediately after his conversion, he instantly becomes a perfected saint; inasmuch as we are assured it is dreadfully heterodox and Popish to imagine anything like a perfecting of character *after* death. On the other hand, if that same man continue to remain on earth, it is admitted that his formation of Christ-like character is a work of considerable time and difficulty.

Now, what is it, we ask, that lies as the basis of this curious and unreasonable idea? An incorrect notion of salvation.

Take the word itself—what does it mean? It comes from the Latin "salvere," to be sound, whole; and conveys the idea of a saving *into*, rather than a mere saving *from*. The words of the angel

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to Joseph give the primary and essential idea that underlies "salvation." "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for He shall save His people *from* their sins," *i.e*, not merely from the consequence of sin, but from the sins themselves. According to the Bible, it is a lifting of us from a condition of sinfulness, and lack of moral and spiritual development, into an ultimate state of absolute perfection. No words can better express the true idea of salvation than those of the Saviour Himself,—

"Ye, therefore, *shall be perfect*, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48 v., Revised Edition).

It is quite true that in being saved we are pardoned—are rescued from the power of death and destruction, and are one day to be admitted into Heaven; but these things, after all, are the concomitants, the accompaniments, rather than the essence of salvation. If Christ be right, salvation involves our being made as perfect as is our heavenly Father. But what does that imply? Surely, that such a work of developing and maturing the character and spiritual nature of man has to be done before that goal can be reached, that no single act of faith and repentance, and no mere transference from one sphere of existence to another, can possibly ac-

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complish it. In other words, that no person can be said to be *saved* until he shall have reached the point of moral perfection, and that no person is even *being saved* until that perfecting has been commenced. The man who repents and turns to Christ has but planted his feet on the first rung of a long ladder whose topmost rung is likeness to God; and every intermediate rung—every advancing step in moral and spiritual excellence—must be trodden by him before the top will be reached.

The following personal experience will illustrate what I wish to convey in regard to the nature of salvation. Not long ago, I was travelling on the Underground Railway in London, when a young Salvation Army captain, with the words, "Blood and Fire," conspicuous on his uniform, entered the carriage in which I was sitting, and seated himself directly in front of me. Whether he scented heresy or not, I do not know, but he eyed me intently for a moment or two, and then asked, "Are you saved?" I was a little taken aback, as there seemed in the question a certain lack of charity, in assuming that I (dressed as a clergyman) was likely to be drifting to an awful doom symbolised by the motto of his party. For my part, I was quite prepared to think that his chances of Heaven, in spite of his

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theology, were quite as good as my own. So in answer to his "Are you saved?" I said "No." A curious look passed over his face, and he evidently expected me to say something more. I then continued, "Don't you think that question of yours is a rather silly one? as silly, I think, as if I were to ask you whether to-day is to-morrow."

He appeared puzzled and I went on. "Do you know what Salvation is?" He did not reply. "It is this," I said, "God's magnificent purpose—called in the Bible 'the Eternal Purpose'—of making us as absolutely perfect in character and spirit as Himself. Christ said so. Do you know what the word itself means?"

He responded it meant a rescue from an everlasting torment in fire.

"Oh, no!" I continued, "you have not half grasped its meaning. Salvation means a condition of wholeness, soundness; in other words it is the *accomplishment* of God's great Purpose of perfecting us. You just now asked me am I saved? and I answered "No," which is true. My character is not yet perfect, my spiritual nature is not yet developed as it must be, and therefore I am not morally and spiritually sound and whole—I am not yet saved. When I shall find myself in Heaven, riddled of every imper-

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fection, with every latent power of good in me developed, and my mind and spirit replete with every grace, and I in all my parts perfect, then, and not until then, shall I be able to say, "I am saved—I am sound." Until then, I can go no further than that which is expressed in the Church Catechism, viz, that I am in a "*state of salvation.*" So when you put your inquiry again to anyone, alter it a little and ask, "Are you *being* saved?"

The young man left the carriage, regarding me, I am afraid, as a very doubtful Christian; and yet, if the word of God be true, persons with bad, unformed, or faulty characters, will not enter God's Heaven quite as easily and as quickly as many suppose.

Glance now for a moment at the other consideration we mentioned, as compelling us to differ from the teaching we are discussing. We think that teaching to be morally harmful.

This same charge has been brought against statements made in the companion-volume to this work ("Our Life after Death"). There, I tried to show, on the authority of Scripture, that there are possibilities of salvation beyond for poor wretched creatures handicapped in the earth-life. Many have been convinced that it is so (as hundreds of letters

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sent to me show) ; but some have not. One very "orthodox" person waxed so indignant against me for venturing to think that God was loving and fair, that he informed me on a post-card, more candid than polite, that I was doing the Devil's work, and that the sooner I departed this life the better. Another, much less fierce, declared that he was praying for me to be delivered out of the snare of Satan, because I did not believe that Almighty Love would aimlessly torture souls forever, and that Jesus really did what St. Peter stated, viz, preached "the *Gospel*" to the spirits of Antediluvians. Both these critics considered that I was encouraging wickedness, and teaching men that it mattered not what kind of a life they led because all would come right hereafter.

My answer to them is this. We who teach that the mercy and love of God has extended, and consequently may still extend, beyond the grave, are the ones of all others who most emphasise the importance of character. We teach, as a fundamental of Christ's religion, that the Life Beyond is complexioned by, and corresponds to, the life on earth, and that no man, be he Christian or unbeliever, can evade the eternal and inviolable law of God, that "whatsoever a man soweth, *that* (not something

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else) shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7 v.). We believe that the man who, during an ungodly earth-life, has sown his future harvest-field with tares, and only sown a wheat-seed on his death-bed, will reap as he has sown. The work of Christ's salvation for him will be the uprooting and destruction of those tares in his moral nature, in order that when the ground shall have been cleared there may be room for the good seed and a better sowing. He may be saved; yet "*so as by fire*" (1 Cor. iii. 15 v.). It is we who are teaching men to be careful how they live. It is our friends who declare that all the consequences of a misspent life and a neglected character can be averted by a death-bed repentance who are giving men a pretext to be careless.

What more likely to make them slip-shod in life, and neglectful as to character, than the belief that one final act of faith will equip them for Heaven and eternity! What more likely to urge them to "a godly, righteous and sober life," to mould their character aright in regard to God, to man and to themselves, than the fixed conviction that faith and repentance are not the *substitutes* for cultivated character; but are only the initial stages of salvation, and that the Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us, can only save us into moral likeness

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to Himself by obliterating in us all that is dissimilar to Him.

Depend upon it, we should be nobler in character and action did we but realise that now by our every-day life we are making ourselves what we shall be; that our life to come will answer to our life that is.

The testimony of the Bible as to the correspondence between the life here and the experience hereafter.

We have had occasion already to refer to two persons—Samuel and Moses—who are introduced by the Bible as manifesting themselves after having passed through the experience of dying. Do we find anything in the little that is told us about them to confirm us in the view we have stated? We think we do.

There can be traced a distinct correspondence between the several experiences of those men before and after death. Their thoughts and ideas are seen to have been complexioned by the thoughts and ideas predominant in the earth-life. Take the case of Samuel, who addressed Israel's unhappy king in the cave of the woman of En-dor. His words are recorded in 1 Sam. xxviii. 16–19 v. Compare that after-death address with words spoken by him years before he had left this world (*see* 1 Sam. xv. 26–28 v.). The likeness is striking. They show that the

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mind that expressed itself from Spirit-life had received its ideas and impressions from its experiences on earth, and was retaining them.

Take the other case—that of Moses on the mountain of Transfiguration. Exactly the same correspondence between the mental experiences of earth-life and those of Spirit-life is shown. His mind was still in the old groove. As the arranger of the Levitical system, his thoughts had been concentrated upon the fact of sacrificial *death;* and after his departure from this world, his ideas had not lost their bent and inclination.

How very suggestive is the statement of the Evangelist that it was not Christ, with Whom Moses was in converse on that mount, Who introduced the subject of the crucifixion, but *they* (Moses and Elias), "who spake of His *decease* which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 31 v.).

Look now at some of the words of our Lord that unquestionably teach that men's life and character on earth will complexion their experiences Beyond. He declared that some should go into an "outer darkness." He was speaking of "the children of the Kingdom," and not of irreligious, profane or scandalously wicked persons. It is clear to whom, in particular, He was referring. He was forecasting

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not the future experience of the *whole* Jewish nation —"the children of the Kingdom"—but that of a certain section of men who viewed themselves as the aristocracy of that Kingdom. His warning was pointed at the orthodox Pharisees—the men so religiously correct; the "High Church" party of the day.

But what was there in the character of those men so radically wrong as to make the "outer darkness" the hereafter correspondence of it?

Christ's scathing words of denunciation disclose it.

Saturated with the thought that it was impossible for their Church to err, or to advance in Divine Knowledge, and bound hand and foot in the grave-clothes of a dead traditionalism that made "the Word of God of none effect," they wilfully blinded themselves to truth and goodness.

Nothing more clearly reveals the mental and spiritual condition of the Pharisees than the fact of their ascribing Christ's magnificent deeds of love and healing to a Satanic cause. Our Lord, borrowing the words of Isaiah, said of them, "Their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand" (Matt. xiii. 15 v.). Now, note how this

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wilful refusal to acknowledge truth and goodness was to complexion their experience in the World Beyond. Their connection with the Church, and their acceptance of orthodox traditions, would not save them from reaping *as* they had sown. They were to go into the "outer darkness." For a time, at least, the light they had despised would be withdrawn from them; an atrophied faculty in them would render them unable to perceive it. The law of consequences would operate.

There are a number of statements of our Lord (far too many to adduce here) that all point to the same conclusion—viz, that there is an inviolable law of God, which will never be suspended either for Christian or unbeliever. And that law is that, whatever we do, whatever disposition we cultivate, and whatever character we form, while here on earth, all must colour our experiences on the other side of the veil. Thus, on His showing, even a cup of cold water, given in the spirit of love, shall bring its reward. The doer of that act of love, in the hereafter, will find himself a rung nearer the goal of perfection than he would have been had he not done it. Thus, on the other hand, on the showing of Christ, the Christian who has obtained the pardon of God, and afterwards refuses to forgive a fellow-creature, will,

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in the hereafter, in spite of his creed and Church privileges, find God's pardon withdrawn, until the spirit of forgiveness shall have been moulded in him.

"Oh, thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredest me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity of thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the gaolers, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So *likewise* shall my heavenly Father do also unto you (He was speaking to the Apostles), if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matt. xviii. 32–35 v.).

When we turn to the utterances of the Apostles, and the New Testament writers who were in close contact with them, we find them asserting the same great principle with which we are dealing. For example, the correspondence between the character of Judas, the thief, and betrayer of his Master, and his after-death experience is recognised. The Apostles mention him in a prayer, not as being in *Hell* (as almost every theological writer has declared), but as having gone "to his *own place*" (Acts i. 25 v.).

The phrase is suggestive. It seems to imply that

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the traitor's experience in Spirit-life was not the conventional stereotyped one, in which all moral distinctions of evil are obliterated, and "all sorts and conditions" of departed wicked men are viewed as being herded together until the Judgment and afterwards; but an experience answering to the character the man had developed. Again, out of many statements of St. Paul, take two. In one, he declares that God "will render to *every* man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that do not obey the truth, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon *every* soul of man that doeth evil; . . . for there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. ii. 6–11 v.).

In the other statement, St. Paul declares, "*Every* man shall bear his own burden. . . . Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 5 and 7 v.). Now, we contend that these passages emphatically teach the following:

(*a*) That there is a great moral law of God, which entails that character and life here will complexion experience hereafter.

(*b*) That this law is a universal and unalterable

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one, and will operate in regard to *every* man, whether he die as a Christian or not.

(*c*) That the doctrine that teaches that the consequences of a misspent life and neglected character and spiritual nature can be wholly escaped by a final, or long-delayed, act of faith and repentance, is an untrue one, and is based upon an incorrect notion of Salvation.

(*d*) That the apostle's words—"He himself shall be saved; *yet so as by fire*" (1 Cor. iii. 15 v.) imply, that for many Christians there will be, in the Life Beyond, a painful saving out of the moral and spiritual experiences that are the correspondences, the harvest, of a wrong sowing in the earth-life. And the theology that denies that there will be this correspondence (as it has done in the case of believers) between reaping and sowing, has practically made this particular truth of the Word of God of none effect by its traditions.

One other statement of Scripture we must notice. During his exile on Patmos, St. John was *en rapport* with the Spiritual World, and a being, whom the apostle mistook for an angel, but who declared himself to be a "fellow-servant" and of his "brethren," manifested himself after death, and bore witness to the truth that life hereafter is com-

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plexioned by, and corresponds to, the life on earth. These were his words, spoken, be it, remembered, from Spirit-life itself. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. xxii. 11 v.).

III.—The Spiritual World is an Educational one.

There are, at the present time, thousands of earnest thinkers within and without the pale of the Church of England, who are convinced that only as this truth is realised will the Christian Religion be able to maintain its influence over the minds and hearts of men of this present century. It is felt that the theological notions and interpretations of Scripture, expressed in the writings of Western Fathers and Schoolmen, hundreds of years ago, do not, and cannot represent Divine truth for *all time*, nor can they voice the ideas of men of to-day. The Christian world of our time is showing signs of being impatient at being told that any doctrine, however crude, must be implicitly accepted, simply because a number of Mediæval, or ante-Mediæval, Church authorities pronounced it to be true. We venture to think that several of the old statements

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of Divine truth require, very urgently, *re-statement*, so that they may be brought into closer harmony with the written Word of God. And among the re-statements that will surely come, will be that which deals with the *character* of the Life Beyond. The revolution in idea concerning it has already commenced.

Now, the ordinary conception of life in the Intermediate World is an inadequate, as well as an illogical, one. It is supposed to have been built up only on the statements of Scripture; but it presents the curious anomaly of being a theological structure, in the building of which more than half of the material supplied by the Bible has been overlooked, or purposely cast aside. Man, as soon as he dies, is regarded as being either in a *hopeless*, or a *stagnant* condition. The *educational* character of the Intermediate Life has been lost sight of, because certain Biblical testimony has not been taken into account.

Examine this statement a little more closely.

First, as to Life Beyond being regarded as a *hopeless* experience.

Popular theology starts its teaching as to the future of man on the assumption that his everlasting destiny will be unalterably fixed at the moment of dying.

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The first editions of "Hymns Ancient and Modern" had these words in a well-known hymn:

> "As the man dies, so shall he be
> All through the days of eternity."

Those lines have now been expunged (which is very suggestive), but they represent a still common idea. Now, of course, if it be believed that every person's condition at death stereotypes him for all eternity, it is impossible to regard the Spiritual World other than as a hopeless experience for all those who depart this life as non-Christians.

Do we grasp what that means? Unfortunately, numbers of Christians do not think, or they would never be able to complacently accept so terrible a doctrine. They take on trust, not what the Word of God says, but what the particular Church or Chapel party to which they belong says that it says. Each particular party, in turn, makes it a matter of conscience only to think as the Fathers and divines of its school have taught them to do.

As regards, at least, nine hundred and ninety-nine in every thousand of earth's teeming millions, so-called "Orthodoxy" has blazoned over the portals of the World beyond the grave—"Abandon all hope, ye who enter here!" So then, according to

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that, that World can be, to the huge majority of our poor fellow-creatures, no more than a wretched ante-chamber of an awful Hell. There, as long as this present world shall last, we are told, must these miserable creatures suffer the inconceivable horror of anticipating an agony of torture that shall be unending.

And because we indignantly refuse to accept such a doctrinal monstrosity as part of the truth of God, and decline to reverence the teachers of such revolting cruelty, such as Augustine and Calvin, we are sometimes called "heterodox." Be it so; rather than be a disciple of either of those men, we would sit as a humble learner at the feet of a little child, who once said in answer to her mother's assertion that very few would go to Heaven, and all the rest would go to Hell,—"Mother, if I had been God, I wouldn't have made all those people that go to Hell. I expect the Devil will be very pleased; but won't God be sorry!"

The marvel of marvels is, that men and women, good, loving and pitiful, and Christ-like in all but their teaching, can find it possible to imagine that God will punish *finite* offences with *infinite* punishment. Is there not something very like irony in calling Him merciful and just, and in the same

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breath attributing to Him a line of conduct that shocks every noble instinct? What awful indifference to human anguish, not to become raving mad the instant that blasphemous doctrine is grasped *as truth!*

What a heartless being is man, if he can eat and drink, and laugh and enjoy himself, and all the time *believe* that millions and millions of his race, and among them many whom he has known and loved, have *already* been plunged into the abyss of everlasting hopelessness, misery and despair!

One thought, however, comforts us. It is this. The Christians who profess to believe in a Hell of unending torture, and in an Intermediate Life that is no more than a hopeless ante-chamber of it, do not, in reality, so believe. They imagine they do so, but that is all.

Theologically, they assent to the doctrine, but (thank God) their *reason* and *moral perception* play no part in the assent. If they did really believe it, one of two things would happen: either they would become insane, or they would lose every particle of concern, except intense horror, for a God who could tolerate such injustice and cruelty. They do neither.

We only accord them common fairness when we

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acknowledge that they are better than their creed, and infinitely nobler in character than the God that traditionalism—coloured by the cruel notions of the age in which it was invented—has set up for them to worship.

But still the fact remains that hundreds of thousands of our fellow-Christians *theoretically* regard the World of Spirit as a region without hope for the vast bulk of mankind.

Further, we stated that popular teaching regards the Intermediate Life as a *stagnant* existence. It views it as a Life uncharacterised by either work, or development; and in this respect it is made to be a Life of no vital nor educational purpose to Man. It is regarded simply as a halting-place for him between earth and Heaven.

"Evangelicism," within and without the Church of England, has taught this.

Starting on the assumption we have mentioned, that everyone's everlasting destiny is unchangeably fixed at death, it teaches that, for those who die as Christians, the Intermediate World is no more than a waiting-place for the Resurrection-body and Heaven.

Regarding physical death as a marvellous event, by which a mental, moral and spiritual excellence is

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there and then attained, man, in the Spiritual World, is thought to have nothing whatever to do but to expect what is in store for him. If we are to accept what we read in the current manuals on this subject, the sum total of our experience between leaving this earth and finding ourselves in Heaven, will consist of taking rest, and enjoying blissful anticipations. We think hereafter Life will embrace a great deal more than that.

The "Evangelical" School is intensely shocked at the barest suggestion that there is a work of expansion and perfecting after death. To some, the idea savours of down-right Popery. Not long ago, a letter from a Low-Churchman in Canada to his mother in London was sent to me for perusal. I had shocked the writer by stating, in a book of mine, that the work of the Holy Ghost would not stop short at death; and this gentleman, who had evidently got "Purgatory" on the brain, and was not clever enough to discriminate between a beautiful Bible truth and a mass of mediæval rubbish piled upon it, solemnly informed his mother that there was not the slightest doubt of my being a "secret agent" of the Church of Rome.

The unnatural, and (we venture to say) the un-Christian, opposition to Prayers for the Departed, too,

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is based upon the notion that the Intermediate Life is a stagnant and purposeless condition.

"What on earth is the good of praying for them," said a friend to me, "seeing that at death every believer is quite ready for Heaven, and only goes into the Intermediate World to wait for the Resurrection-body?"

The good man was quite upset at my not believing that all Christians *directly after death* will be perfected saints, and quite shocked at my suggesting that there might be *post-mortem* improvement, as in the case of the Antediluvians to whom Jesus preached His *Gospel.* But the final shock was given when I asserted that prayers for the Departed might be helpful to them in their work for a loving Saviour, on behalf of poor "lost sheep," who had not as yet been found.

I did not convince him. Plain statements of Scripture that teach improvement and mercy beyond the grave were all thrust aside for "the traditions of the elders." Early training in a hard doctrine had blocked the windows of his mind against any inlet of brighter light from the Religion of Jesus. He clung to the conviction (as many others do) that man, as he enters the Spiritual World, must either be quite ready for Heaven or ripe for Hell.

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From all such kind of teaching as instanced above, which seems to make Christ's Gospel hardly a Gospel at all, we turn with a sigh of relief to the thought of the Life Beyond as an *educational* one. And at once a number of difficulties disappear; difficulties that, like dark and ugly shadows, have lurked in the theology of the past, and have scared away good and thoughtful men from Christ and the Church.

There is no need to do more than glance at two of these man-made difficulties.

There is that of imagining that men and women (to say nothing of infants and children), who pass out of this life mentally, morally and spiritually undeveloped, can possibly be perfect beings, suitable for Heaven, immediately they step into the World Beyond.

That is a doctrine to which those are committed who deny the educational character of the Spiritual Life. Is it a reasonable one? We think it is not. We account it as no more than a supposition, not countenanced by Scripture, and most certainly not suggested by anything we know of God's method of working either in physical nature or grace. Nothing but a direct statement from Christ Himself that it was so would make the idea credible to us; and any such statement there is not.

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But—it is sometimes argued—the pardon of sin, through faith in Christ, includes perfecting. That is to say, if a person repents and believes, even just before he dies, as soon as death takes place he becomes perfect in character and spirit. Against that, we ask—why, then, is not perfection reached by a believer, however long he may remain on earth? What magical power has physical dissolution upon mind and spirit to bring about in a moment or two that which fifty years of earthly Christian living cannot effect. The fact is, pardon and faith are no more than the initial stages of a great work, whose end and accomplishment is moral and spiritual perfecting. To confound, as many have done, the beginning with the end—to imagine a man can suddenly attain Christ-likeness, because he has believed and God has pardoned him—is a mistake as great as to tell a sick man he is well because he has put himself into the hands of a physician, or to reckon a boy a philosopher because he has just started to study that subject.

The theology of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is of a more reasonable character. He exhorted Christians to leave "the principles" (the A B C) "of the doctrine of Christ," among which he

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named "repentance" and "faith," and to "*go on unto perfection*" (Heb. vi. 1 v.).

Glance at another difficulty that confronts us, directly we deny the educational character of the Intermediate Life. I mean in regard to those who go out of this world without possessing any knowledge whatever of Christ. Into what a tremendous moral difficulty do we launch ourselves the moment we exclude the possibility of education after death for them.

I have been told by certain Christians who are not very much given to thinking, that it is quite just that non-Christians should be damned for ever, since everyone can, if he wishes, learn about the Saviour. How will such persons dispose of the following case? A city-missionary went to visit a poor dying girl in a filthy back slum of London. "Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" he asked. "No," answered the girl, with her last words, "I never heard of Him, and I know He don't live down this court."

Picture the thousands of millions who, like that girl, have died without having ever heard the name of Him Who loved them and gave Himself for them.

According to the Bible, Christ, "the Saviour of *all* men," is their Saviour, and none unconnected with Him can ever reach the goal of Salvation.

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According to a cruel and unreasoning theology there can be no education after death.

But what of that girl and those millions? we ask. Are they all to be lost because they died without a knowledge which their environment made it impossible for them to obtain? Is that consistent with either Divine love, mercy or fairness? And yet to say that the goodness of God will vouchsafe to them hereafter a knowledge of the Saviour, withheld from them here, is to give the lie direct to the theory that denies that education is a characteristic of Life Beyond. It will be an education in the highest sense of the word, if those poor handicapped ones after death are brought to know Christ, and by knowing Him are led on to mental and moral advance.

Our friends, therefore, must choose between two alternatives; viz, either they must grant that *post-mortem* education is possible, or must admit that the Bible's claim for Christ, as being "the Saviour of *all* men," is far too embracive. The denial of the former makes Him for, at least, nine-tenths of the human race no Saviour at all.

The Testimony of the Bible as to the Educational character of the Spiritual World.

First, we notice that our Lord recognised this

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beautiful truth; not, indeed, in the form of a dogmatic statement, but certainly by implication. His disciples, at the time of His being with them, were not capable of receiving all the truths concerning His Gospel. Christ's own words show this. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." It was not until the illuminating power of the Holy Ghost had been bestowed upon them at Pentecost that they were able to perceive the interior meaning of much He had spoken to them by parables and otherwise.

Take Christ's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

Therein he represents Dives as becoming *less* selfish, less concerned about himself, after death than he had been before. Was there not an educational character in regard to that painful experience in Hades?

May we not see in that experience the beginning of that which St. Paul describes as a saving "so as by fire"?

Take Jesus's words spoken to the dying robber. Will anyone venture to assert that an educational experience did not accrue to that godless, ignorant and debased man, from the fact of his being with Jesus in Paradise? Was not Christ's gracious

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promise to him prompted by the wish that Divine enlightenment should come to the poor wretch, who, when he died, had little or none of it? How reasonable the thought that the crucified robber was one in that vast congregation of spirits who listened to the "Gospel," as Christ preached it to the Antediluvians!

Again, take two such statements of our Lord as the following, and see how in the case of some, at all events, they must imply continued education after death. He said, "*Every* branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit" (John xv. 2 v.), and, "I *shall* show you plainly of the Father" (John xvi. 25 v.). In the first passage, Christ lays down a great principle, viz, that a purging, *i. e.*, an educational discipline is a necessity for *every* person connected with Him, "the Vine." In the other passage, He promises to *plainly* show the Father, *i. e.*, to reveal truths concerning God, only partially understood.

Now, suppose a person does not accept Christ as his Saviour until he is at the point of dying; and there are such cases. What then? That tardy act of faith will connect him with Jesus, and make him a "branch" in Him. But what of the purging and the fuller revelation of the Father? In other words

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—what of the moral and spiritual disciplining which Christ pronounces to be indispensable? What of the acquirement of that knowledge of God which Jesus declared to be a pre-requisite for the possession of eternal life? (*see* John xvii. 3 v.). Will those two great phases of educational work be accomplished in the act of dying? Surely not; they are slow and gradual works. Then what? Either Christ's statements must be pared down, and not *every* branch will be purged, and not *every* believer will be shown plainly of the Father; or the spiritual and mental education of one who turns to Christ on his death-bed must go on in the Life Beyond.

We turn now to a few of the Apostolic statements contained in the New Testament; reminding the reader that it is to this part of the Bible, more than to any other, he should look for enlightenment as to the interior truths of the Gospel, inasmuch as the Apostles were specially equipped by the Holy Spirit as the exponents of Christ's teaching.

Do their statements, then, either directly or indirectly teach the educational character of the Intermediate Life? We think they do; nay more, they seem to us incapable of any reasonable interpretation except in the light of that truth.

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Consider some of the passages in which this truth is directly asserted.

In Phil. i. 6 v., St. Paul writes—"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you *will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*" What is the "good work" that has been begun? Sanctification; Christ's difficult work of fashioning a human spirit into moral and spiritual likeness to Himself. What are we to understand by "the day of Jesus Christ"? A period not yet reached when Christ shall be revealed to the universe as the Vanquisher of evil, and "all things shall be subdued unto Him." Now, according to St. Paul, this good work, commenced in the Philippian Christians, was to be performed *until then;* that is to say, sanctification was not to stop short of death, but to go on in that Intermediate Existence that lay between earth-life and "the day of Jesus Christ."

The question is—Did St. Paul mean what he wrote? If so, he taught education beyond the grave.

Take another statement of the same Apostle.

In 2 Cor. xii. 1–4 v., he tells the Corinthian Church of an experience that he had. Before the death of his physical body, he had entered the Spiritual World ("caught up into Paradise") and

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had heard unpublished or untaught words (ἄρ'ῥ'ητα ῥ'ήματα) which it is not in one's power (ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν) to utter. What is the inference? we ask. Is it not this? That in the Spiritual World there are attainments of knowledge incapable of being translated into mundane language, and that St. Paul in going into that World was brought into contact with that knowledge. Surely in this passage we have a most positive declaration that Spirit-life is educational.

Again, St. Paul's statement that a Christian may "be saved, yet *so as by fire*" (1 Cor. iii. 15 v.) seems to point most clearly to educational discipline after death. The context shows that the Apostle was referring to the case of one wrongly building upon the "foundation," Jesus Christ; and asserts that "the day" (evidently that of Christ) shall declare every man's work, and although the work may be destroyed and the man suffer loss, yet he "himself shall be saved; yet so by fire."

What are we to understand by this "fire"? It cannot mean *final* condemnation, because the man is to be *saved*. Nor can it denote *earthly* discipline, as the saving by fire is declared to be a future event after the earth-work has been done. It can, then, only point to an experience in the

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Spirit-life, difficult and painful, no doubt, but at the same time remedial and educational in its character. We submit that this latter is the most reasonable construction to put upon the passage, and it harmonises with our Lord's description of the after-death experience of Dives, who, by the word "Son," addressed to him, was shown to be a member of the Jewish Church.

Then we have the statement of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who mentions "the *spirits* of just men having been made perfect" (τετελειωμένων) (Heb. xii. 23 v.). He is trying to concentrate the thought of Christians upon a "cloud of witnesses" in another World, by which they are "compassed about," and to which they are spiritually come. Among "an innumerable company of angels" and departed members of the Christian Church ("the Church of the first-born which are written in heaven"), he includes "the *spirits* of just men having been made perfect."

He is referring to such men as Abraham, Moses and others who, by their long sojourn in the Intermediate World, had attained perfection, and it is very significant that in describing their condition there, the writer uses the perfect participle, which denotes that their perfection had been *lately* ac-

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quired rather than at a time in the remote past at which they had left this world.

Here, again, we note a clear indication of an educational work beyond the grave.

We contend, also, that such passages as the following imply the same truth.

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect . . . but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 12–14 v.).

"For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12 v.). "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God *unto a perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13 v.).

"That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and *without blemish*" (Eph. v. 27 v.).

Now these magnificent forecasts of St. Paul are prophecies of what he and the members of the Christian Church will be in the Hereafter. Moral

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perfection, full knowledge and Christ-like spiritual stature are to be attained. Yes, but *when* and *how?*

St. Paul, we think, has answered the questions.

At the day of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, Who beyond the grave and until that day will perform the good work of sanctification begun on earth.

Read in the light of this truth his words—"For me to live is Christ, and *to die is gain*"—become pregnant with meaning. Stripped of the idea that there is no education, no advance towards fuller grace and more perfect knowledge in the World Beyond, they lose one-half of their significance.

There remains an important consideration that arises from a large number of statements in Scripture, and points, we think, very conclusively to the educational character of life beyond the grave. It is this. The New Testament not only declares that there has been *a preaching of the Gospel* to persons departed this life, but also contains scores and scores of passages that can only be viewed as exaggerations, unless the Gospel is still being, and still will be, preached to untold millions who have never heard it, and will never hear it in this world. We will refer to those passages directly; but first,

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let us point out the direct bearing of this upon the subject under review.

What is the end of preaching? Is it not to enlighten, to morally and spiritually advance, and to bring persons to goodness and to God? If that be so, then preaching is a means to education; and education, moreover, in the highest sense of the word. Consequently, if it can be shown from the Bible that Christ's Gospel has been preached in the World of Spirit, and if there exist also the strongest of reasons, based on other Biblical statements, for supposing that that Gospel is still being preached, then surely the point must be conceded; and on the showing of Scripture itself, the Spiritual World to the vast majority of the human race must be an educational one.

Consider the statement that the Gospel *has been* preached in the World of Spirit.

An Apostle, specially endowed by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and previously brought into very close contact with the reality of the Spiritual World on the mountain of Transfiguration, distinctly and emphatically declared this truth. We have several times referred to his statement in 1 Peter iii. 18–20 v., and iv. 6 v.; and we must do so again in this place.

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Many attempts have been made to explain away the plain and natural meaning of these texts, simply because theologians have been obliged to do this, or to reject the received teaching that mercy and education are impossible after death.

And so St. Peter's statement, in order that it may not stand as a flat contradiction of a theological dogma, has had an unnatural sense forced into it. We do not believe that any Greek scholar would ever have dreamed of putting upon these words of the Apostle any other interpretation than that for which we contend, had it not been felt that they must be made somehow or another to fit in with "orthodox" ideas. The words have been approached with the foregone conclusion that, of course, there can be neither a preaching of the Gospel, nor improvement in the Life Beyond. The Word of God has had to give place to "the tradition of the elders."

Now take St. Peter's words. He declares that Christ was "put to death in the flesh" (*i. e.*, at the crucifixion), "but quickened *in* the spirit" (*i. e.*, in that part of His being—His spirit-body—that survived physical death; and in which He was with the robber in Paradise on the same day); "*in* which also He went and preached unto the *spirits* in keep-

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ing." That is perfectly plain, although the attempt has been made to obscure this meaning by substituting "by" for "in," and putting a capital "S" to "spirit."

The Apostle then tells us who these spirits were. They were the Antediluvians who had physically perished in the Flood on account of their wickedness; but who after death had been brought by God's judgment to obedience. "Which sometime" (implying, no longer) "were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

He next declares that the Saviour's preaching to those beings in the Spiritual World was a preaching of "*the Gospel*"; that the object of its being preached was that they might be dealt with in the same manner as men in the flesh who would hear it, and that they might be brought by that Gospel to do in the Spirit-World what they had not done on earth—to live according to God. "For for this cause was the *Gospel* preached *also* to the dead" (*i. e.*, to those departed this life), "in order that they might be judged according to" (*i. e.*, by the same standard as, viz, the offer of Salvation through Christ) "men in the flesh, but might live according to God in the spirit" (*i. e.*, as beings in the Spiritual World).

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We submit that of no words in the Bible is the meaning plainer than of these. They teach not only that there has been a preaching of the Gospel after death for a purpose educational in the highest degree, but they also teach that a work of education had been going on in the Spirit-World among disobedient sinners *before* that Gospel was preached to them by Jesus.

We also asserted that there exists the strongest of reasons, based on statements of Scripture, for warranting the belief that the Gospel is still being preached in the World Beyond. In a companion work to this volume ("Our Life after Death") I have dealt with this phase of the subject at considerable length; so a brief consideration of it must now suffice.

There are in Holy Scripture a very large number of passages that declare that God's purpose of salvation in Christ was made in view of the human race *as a whole.* Christ is represented as the Saviour not merely for a favoured few—the "elect"—but for *all* mankind. That is to say, a knowledge of Christ, and the acceptance of Him as a Saviour, must be a possibility to every human being who has lived, or shall live, unless the Bible does not mean what it states. The theology that has denied that God's saving mercy can operate outside the narrow circle

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of "election," and has viewed the Christian Church not, as St. James represents it, merely as the "*first fruits* of God's creatures" (James i. 18 v.), but as the *entire harvest* of redemption, has wholly failed to understand the meaning and purpose of election. There is, undoubtedly, an election of some to certain Christian privileges in this world denied to millions and millions of others; but to make this election a Divine scheme whereby all those others are excluded from the pale of salvation, and hopelessly left to drift into perdition, is a thought that could only have been begotten in the age of an Augustine or a Calvin. And it is a slander upon Him Whose name is "Love." We ask the reader to think over the following, taken from scores of Biblical passages of the same import.

Jesus said, "God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16 v.). "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that *the world* through Him might be saved" (17 v.).

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all* men unto Me" (John xii. 32 v.).

St. John wrote: "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*" (1 John ii. 2 v.).

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"The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of *the world*" (1 John iv. 14 v.).

St. Paul wrote: "Who will have *all men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4 v.).

"Who gave Himself a ransom *for all*, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. ii. 6 v.).

"We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of *all men*, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10 v.).

Now the question is—How are we going to deal with these magnificent statements of Holy Writ?

Two methods are open to us. We can ignore them at the bidding of a theology that has practically closed its eyes to the fact that they exist; or we can look these passages honestly, fairly, and thankfully, in the face. If we do the latter, we shall shut ourselves up to the conviction that there must be a preaching of Christ's Gospel in the Intermediate World. It is not true that God loved *the world;* it is not true that He wills that *all men* should be saved; it is not true that Christ will draw *all* men unto Himself; and it is, certainly, not true that He is the Saviour of *all men*, if millions of millions of our fellow-creatures—in fact, the whole of the human race, except a comparative handful—are to

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lose salvation, because God has affixed this miserable little span of earth-life as the only period in which a knowledge of Christ is possible, and at the same time has so circumstanced these millions of millions that never in this world have they so much as even heard the Saviour's name. How, in that case, we ask, can Christ be a "ransom *for all*, to be testified in *due time*"?

Admit the truth that the preaching begun by the Saviour in the Spirit-World is still continued by those of His Church who are now there, and that it will be continued as long as there remains one human soul to whom the Christ has not been offered, and at once all difficulty vanishes. Then, and only then, can it be true that the Father's love embraces *the world*, and that Jesus is the Saviour of *all men*. Millions of millions of men and women have died in absolute ignorance of the Father's love, and the Son He gave; millions in the same condition are dying every year; and if but one of those perish because the Gospel was not preached to him, everyone of those passages of Scripture just instanced must be recast. It seems to us we have no alternative but to admit that there must be a preaching of Christ Beyond, whereby the Spiritual World is made an educational life, or to acknowledge that God's love

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and Christ's work have been overstated by the Bible. Lastly, there are passages in the Epistles that clearly show that the knowledge of Jesus is to be extended to earth's myriads in the World Beyond.

St. Paul states: "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead" (*i. e.*, the departed) "and living" (*i. e.*, those still on earth) (Rom. xiv. 9 v.). "That in the dispensation of *the fulness of times*, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in the heavens, and which are on earth; even in Him" (Eph. i. 10 v.). "God hath given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things *under the earth*" (Phil. ii. 9 and 10 v.). By the phrase "*under the earth*," St. Paul was referring to Hades. The common idea in the Apostles' time was that the spirits of men after death dwelt somewhere in the bowels of the earth. The point to be noted is this, that every knee in this World of Spirit is to bow at the name of Jesus. Those words mean nothing, unless they imply a universal knowledge of the Saviour, and with that knowledge infinite possibilities of blessing to the sons and daughters of Man.

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We appeal, therefore, to reason and faith, to our moral instincts and the Bible, in support of the view that the Spiritual World is an educational one.

IV.—In the Spiritual World there is a Presence of Christ.

By many Christians this is a truth that is not grasped. It upsets preconceived ideas embodied in the code of theology to which they assent, and seems to open wide a door of hope which "Evangelical" doctrine, so-called, has closed and barred at death against all but the favoured few.

They believe in a Christ Who has ascended into *Heaven*, but they cannot imagine Him as being anywhere else. They admit, in the face of Jesus's dying words to the robber, that He did once go into the Intermediate World; but that was before the Ascension, and since that event, say they, there can be no Presence of Him except in Heaven itself.

A reader of the companion-volume of this book wrote to tell me that he went entirely with me in the views therein set forth, with one exception. He could not agree with me in believing that Christ's Presence had, since His resúrrection, ever been manifested in the Intermediate World; because both the Creed and Scripture affirm that "He ascended into

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Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God." How, he asked, if Christ be seated on God's right hand in Heaven, can He be in another place that is not Heaven?

My answer to that was—What do you understand by Christ being on "the right hand of God"? Do you imagine that He is stationed at a spot by God's throne, from which He *never moves;* or do you think that the phrase "the right hand of God" is merely used to denote that He occupies the highest position of honour and dignity in the universe? If you adopt this latter and reasonable view, there is not a shadow of difficulty in believing that there is a Presence of the Saviour in the Intermediate World. No one in his senses would dream of asserting that because the Prince of Wales is said to stand at the right hand of England's monarch, he cannot therefore be present at any other spot in the empire.

Before we turn to Scripture to show that it warrants us in believing that there is Christ's Presence in the World of Spirit, let us, very briefly, estimate the import of that truth. It implies, surely, infinite possibilities of mercy and blessing for that vast, and unthinkable, aggregation of human beings, who have lived on earth, passed hence, and are still living in the World Beyond.

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Try to conceive of the myriads of men, women and children represented by the words—"the Departed." It is estimated that about 30,000 persons die every week. Picture, if you can, the huge concourse of human spirits that have gone into the Spiritual World in the past fifty years. Then think of the millions of millions that for hundreds of centuries, probably, have been pouring into that World from such vast continents as Africa and America, and from such countries as China and India.

Not one in every ten thousand of those persons has died knowing anything of Christ, and, if the Bible be true, not one of them can be saved apart from Him. What, we ask, must the Saviour's Presence mean to all those unsaved and ignorant ones? Infinite possibilities, we have said. And it must be so; it must be so, if Christ be Christ.

The New Testament declares Him to be "the *same*, yesterday, and to-day and forever" (Heb. xiii. 8 v.). We know what He *was* when He lived out His beautiful life here on earth as the manifestation of God. We do not know what He *is*, except we accept the testimony of the Word of God. That tells us He is the same: the same loving, merciful, pitiful Jesus. Is He the same? Not if popular theology be right. It has transformed Him into quite

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another Jesus. The Christ Who wept over sinful Jerusalem, because forty years afterwards temporal woes were to come upon that city, has been traditionalised into a Christ Who will sit upon His throne, and not weep, although the bulk of those whom He loved, and for whom He died, will suffer the horrors and tortures of a Hell forever. The Jesus Who with His dying breath prayed for His murderers, and promised a magnificent blessing to a debased and cursing malefactor, will not (so we have been told) extend a merciful thought, nor speak a pardoning word, to sinners who are on the other side of the veil. Oh! no, if the old theology be right, He is not *the same* Christ: He is no more like Jesus of Nazareth, Who passed by and blessed men, than the winter frost is like the summer sunshine. But we have no right to ignore, or to twist, Biblical statements to suit the convenience of theological preconceptions. Scripture asserts that Jesus Christ is "the same" to-day and forever, as He was yesterday. I know what He was yesterday, when He walked this earth. I can gather, from the records of His life, what was His character and disposition, and what He said and did. He was a Jesus Who yearned for poor lost sinners, to bring them to goodness and to God. From that I can form an idea of Him as

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He is now. The Bible tells me He is "the same"; He has not altered; He is not a Christ with a new set of feelings, desires and attributes, different from those that He had when He helped and blessed mankind in the streets and highways of Palestine, or preached to, and reclaimed, lost sinners in the World beyond the grave. If those words in the Epistle to the Hebrews are true, I may know, from what Jesus did for unsaved humanity in this world, what He is still doing, and will do, for ten thousand times a greater mass of lost ones behind the veil.

Here, He would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Will He do so there? Here, He said He would leave the ninety and nine, and go after the poor lost sheep *until He find it.* Will He not do so there? Here, no cry for mercy or help was disregarded by Him. Is He deaf to such cries in the World Beyond? Here, He toiled and wearied Himself; journeyed, hungered, suffered, bled, and died, so that a handful of earth's millions might hear from His lips the truth of God. Will He do nothing in the Spiritual World to bring those millions themselves to Him Whom they have never had a chance of knowing during their life on earth?

Is it true that He is "the Saviour of *all* men,"

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and yet not present in the Spiritual World, that is so full of men and women who are not saved, because the Saviour has never been preached to them? We cannot believe it; it dethrones Jesus from His position as Saviour of the world, and leaves the vast bulk of our race with no possibility of hope and salvation. Against this hard, this cruel, and essentially selfish doctrine, we set the glorious and God-like words—"Jesus Christ, *the same*, yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

The testimony of the Bible as to Christ's Presence in the Spiritual World:

We glance, now, at some of the passages in the New Testament that teach the Presence of Jesus in the Intermediate World.

First, we place our Lord's words—"Lo, I am *with you alway*, even unto the end of the world" (Greek—until the completion of the age, or Dispensation: Matt. xxviii. 20 v.).

We view those words as a promise to the whole Christian Church, and not merely to His Apostles. The command given at the same time as the promise—to go and teach all nations, and baptise them—was, undoubtedly, a command to the Church at large. But in whatever way the promise be taken, whether as given only to the Apostles, or to the

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Church that was to exist, it seems to us it cannot be fulfilled if there be no Presence of Christ in the Spiritual World.

We ask—Where are those Apostles now, and where is the great Church of Jesus, with the exception of that comparatively small section of it "militant here in earth"? They and it are not in Heaven, if the Bible be right, but in the Spiritual World.

And the age, or Dispensation, has not yet reached its end, and Jesus is to be with them *alway*, even to that end. Is that true? We cannot see how it can be, if there be no Presence of Him in that Spirit-World, where are the Apostles, and where is the greater part of His Church, and where have been for eighteen centuries some of "the host who have crossed the stream."

Suppose, on the other hand, we take this beautiful promise to imply that the Saviour is in the Spiritual World; what then? A magnificent vision of Him and His Church comes into view. I see a Christ Who does not complacently sit on His throne while myriads of unsaved ones must perish for lack of the knowledge of Him, and I see a Church, no longer half-hearted in her Master's work of saving souls, but doing Beyond what she never has done,

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and probably never will do on earth—obeying the Divine command to "preach the Gospel to *every* creature."

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; . . . they rest from their *labours*" —yes, from all effort that is painful and wearisome; but not to be idle, not to cease their attempts to lead lost sheep to the unchanged Shepherd, but to be God's mediums of blessing to unfavoured others, because "their *works* do follow *with* them" (μετ' αὐτων—Rev. xiv. 13 v.).

There are statements of St. Paul that declare the same truth. He wrote: "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by *faith*, not by *sight*): we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and *to be present with the Lord*" (2 Cor. v. 6–8 v.).

The context of this passage shows that the Apostle knew that, at the death of his physical body, he would not go to Heaven, but into a World where he would be "unclothed," until such time as he should be "clothed upon" with a new resurrection-body. His gaze was pre-eminently fixed upon "the redemption of the body," as the consummation of the work of salvation.

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And yet he is willing rather to be absent from the body—to enter upon this "unclothed" state—because thereby he would be present with the Lord.

How, we ask, could he be with Christ, if in the Spiritual World to which St. Paul was going there was no Presence of Him?

The same great truth is expressed by the Apostle in another Epistle.

In Phil. i. 21, 23 and 24 v., he writes: "To die is gain. . . . For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and *to be with Christ;* which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

There is another statement in the New Testament, which we commend to the thoughtful consideration of those who find it difficult to think of Christ being in the Intermediate World, on account of the words—"He ascended into *Heaven.*"

St. Luke describes a scene in which St. Paul, in order that he might not be "pulled in pieces" by the religionists of his day, was taken by force by the civil authorities, and put for safety into a castle. On the night following, "*the Lord stood by him,* and said—Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts xxiii. 11 v.).

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We ask this question—If Jesus, after His ascension, could, although He had ascended into Heaven, be at the side of St. Paul in a Palestinian prison, why is it incredible that there is a Presence of Him in that great World where His saving power is needed so much?

Thus, from the Bible itself, are we sure that the Christ Who went among men on earth, "doing good," and lifting them to God, is still doing the same in that much larger World, into which is pouring, century after century, earth's myriads, unblessed, unenlightened and unsaved.

Some may frown at us for holding this glorious hope, but the trend of present-day religious thought is towards the recognition of it. This truth has been lost sight of for centuries, because the ugly shadows of Western theology have obscured the light of God. They linger still—those shadows—but they are growing less black, in the returning day-dawn of a better understanding of the Word of God; and ere long, we venture to predict, they will have been scared away, and the Christ will stand forth, not as the Jesus Who loved so many and will win so few, but as the Christ of surpassing grandeur—the strong Son of God, *mighty* to save.

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Conclusion

In the foregoing pages, we have seen that the Bible, by disclosing certain facts concerning our being and constitution, and the great Spiritual World with which we are so closely connected, has answered, clearly and definitely, the important Question—"*What will become of us when we die?*"

It has told us that we are beings possessed of a spirit and a spirit-body, which are enwrapped, while we live out our first phase of existence on the plane of matter, in an exterior physical body; and that, when at death this physical body is laid aside, this spirit and spirit-body will obtain their complete "adaptation to environment" in a Spiritual World, where the second phase of existence, coloured and complexioned by the life that has preceded it, will be started; and where education and progress will be possible.

And with regard to those facts disclosed by the Bible, be it remembered that they are not presented to us for acceptance simply and solely on the basis of *faith*.

There is the *antecedent probability* that those records of spiritual experiences are true. There is no

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call in accepting them for an authoritative pronouncement that they *must* be believed because they are in the Bible; no need to set our thinking powers aside, and to unquestioningly assent to what we are told. We *are* required by Scripture to believe certain great truths only on the grounds of faith, but those records of spiritual experiences are not among that number. Later history furnishes a testimony of such a character as to make it more likely that those Bible-records are true than untrue. The things that happened long ago, have happened since.

Many and many of the experiences of the Spiritual, declared by the Bible to have been vouchsafed to men and women in the past, are credible, because they have been vouchsafed again and again to mankind during the intervening centuries, and are being vouchsafed to thousands living to-day. To those of us who have investigated the subject, the knowledge of present-day *facts* concerning the Spiritual in us and about us, makes it an easy matter to believe the testimony of the Bible as to the facts that completely coincide with them. We do not have to do as so many good and earnest Christians have had to do in order to persuade themselves that they believe the Word of God, viz, to close the ears

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against the slightest breath of criticism, and to religiously chloroform the mind for fear it should think. We have not a shadow of reason for doubting the records of that Book. It does but tell us great facts as to spirit-life which are capable of verification, inasmuch as they are taking place now. When we *know* that persons now living are possessed of powers of clairvoyance and clairaudience, why question the Bible when it tells us of those similarly gifted long ago? When we ourselves *have seen* persons exhibiting powers of thought and speech which we can prove to be not their own, why invent an ingenious theory to explain away the statements of Scripture, that men and women were controlled by spiritual beings, and that Christ and others cast out from them the evil spirits?

What an enormous gain is it to all who view the Bible—as we do—as the Text-Book of truth for all time, if they can take those records of spiritual phenomena, not as symbolisms nor allegories; not as mysterious, extraordinary occurrences that happened long ago, and detached and isolated from all that can possibly happen now; but as *facts* whose correspondences are to be found in the subsequent and present-day history of mankind!

Thus, only, is it possible for the assent we give to

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the statements of Scripture to rise out of the region of credulity into the higher and better atmosphere of real faith in which the intellectual powers of a man are called into play, and conviction, grounded on reason, can live and grow.

There is another consideration to which we would direct the reader's attention. It is this. The tendency of scientific thought, in regard to the investigation of Psychical phenomena, and that also which is known as "Spiritualism," is decidedly to confirm the Bible's declarations as to the nature of Man, and the existence of something *non-physical* or *ultra-physical* within and about him. The subject is too great a one to be dealt with in the closing pages of this volume. Those who are abreast of the science of to-day well know that many of the ablest of our scientific men have discarded the idea that it is any longer possible to account for Man and a certain class of his experiences on the supposition that he is merely material. One of these scientists who, although not a Spiritualist, admits the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism, writes: "Spiritism has also served a noble purpose, in that it has stayed the wave of materialism which swept like a cyclone over the civilised world, upon the announcement of the doctrine of organic evolution."

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The scientific men who have not stared so intently at the physical as to lose all perception of the Spiritual, not only now acknowledge such facts as Clairvoyance, Clairaudience, Telepathy and the genuineness of phenomena termed "Spiritualistic," but admit that there exists in Man *two* minds; that he possesses powers that transcend the senses, which constitutes presumptive evidence that those powers do not perish when the senses are extinguished; and also that the phenomena referred to cannot be explained by any hypothesis that excludes the non-physical.

We give an extract from a work of a well-known and distinguished scientist. He writes:

"It will now be conceded that whilst the existence of a *dual* mind in Man is presumptively proven by the very nature of the phenomena exhibited, *it is conclusively demonstrated* by the facts of physiology and cerebral anatomy. . . . The objective mind is the function of the brain, and ceases when the brain dies, or is destroyed. The subjective mind, on the other hand, belongs to an entity, which is neither dependent for its existence, nor for the power to perform its functions, upon the vitality, or even the existence, of the brain."

In the face of a conclusion such as this, openly

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professed, not by a doctor of theology, but by a man of science, where, we ask, is the difficulty of accepting the statements of the Bible, that Moses, Samuel, our Lord, the crucified robber, the departed Antediluvians, "the souls under the altar," and others, were, after death, living entities who could think and speak?

The time is coming, and it is not far off, we think, when the belief of mankind as to the existence of a spirit within them and a Spiritual World environing them, will rest as it did in days of old, and when Jesus walked this earth, on ascertained fact. Tens of thousands now are getting to *know* what they once only believed; and Science, banned and excommunicated by Popes and Christians for centuries, will ere long be shown to be the handmaid of *true* religion—the prover that the Bible is true, and that Man and his surroundings are interpenetrated by the Spiritual.

It only remains for us, in a few closing words, to point out the bearing of all we have considered upon our religious thought, and upon some of the common, but most affecting, experiences of life. If, in regard to man and the Spiritual World, the case be such as we think the Bible has very clearly disclosed it to be, it must considerably re-complexion some of

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the common ideas held concerning the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as ideas as to what we are, and what we shall be when this brief span of earthly existence shall have been lived out, and we shall form part of that great multitude who have passed beyond the veil. Moreover, we cannot grasp these overlooked truths of Scripture without *exalting* our conceptions of God and of His revelations made to mankind through His eternal Son. That, surely, will be an enormous gain to true Religion. It will mean the pruning away of some of the errors that have been grafted on the stock of Divine truth during the centuries. The Religion of Jesus itself will be all the better for the pruning. As the truths with which we have dealt are realised, Christianity will assume an attractiveness and a reasonableness which will woo thousands of thoughtful men to its ranks.

Like a burst of Divine sunshine, those truths will disperse the earth-born fogs, which, gendered in the heated atmosphere of fevered imaginations of men like Augustine, Calvin and others, have enwrapped in awful gloom the theology of the past, distorted man's vision of the great Father-God, blurred His glorious truth, and sent hundreds of thousands of our fellow-creatures shuddering into the shades of a

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cheerless Agnosticism. It will be possible, then, for such to love and revere the Lord and His Christ. Yes; the grasping of these great truths will invest the Gospel with reasonableness. It is not reasonable —and all the learned sophistry of the theological schools cannot make it reasonable—to imagine that a God, whose name is "Love," should coerce into Heaven by "irresistible grace" a few royal favourites, and indifferently pass over and allow to drift into perdition, without any effort to rescue them, earth's teeming myriads.

It is not reasonable to suppose that the everlasting destiny of the bulk of mankind, whom God wills to be saved, and who have never so much as heard of a Saviour, should be determined by a brief earth-life. It is not reasonable to believe that a solitary act of faith and repentance at the fag-end of a misspent life can enable a person to suddenly acquire a moulded and perfected character, and a spirit replete with every Christ-like grace. It is not reasonable to teach in one breath that Christ is "the Saviour of *all* men," and was manifested "to *destroy* the works of the devil," and in the next breath to teach that the knowledge of Him cannot be vouchsafed to the ignorant and unsaved crowds that throng the Spirit-World, and that, when the end shall come, those

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crowds shall be the everlasting witnesses that evil, not Christ, has triumphed.

These are strong words, I know; but not too strong as a protest against a great deal of what has been written and labelled as "Gospel."

Some there will be who will read these pages, and deny the conclusion at which we have arrived. To such we say—Put all we have affirmed in the form of negative propositions, and then ask which is the better Gospel; the one more Scriptural, more worthy of God and the beautiful Christ as He is photographed in the New Testament. Is yours, which denies the educational character of the Spiritual World, and shuts off the Saviour from poor lost sheep in that World; or is ours (or rather God's), which enables us to accept, without any mental reservations, the glorious truths that the Father is "Love," and the Christ is unchanged, and that one day He shall not be disappointed because He has failed to "draw all men" to Himself, but "shall see of the travail of His soul, and *shall be satisfied*"? (Isa. liii. 11 v.).

Ask yourself—Which is the more likely to be true—a Gospel, in the scope of which there is room enough for the exercise of all the acknowledged attributes of God—His love, mercy, justice, compas-

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sion and infinite solicitude for the happiness and well-being of man ; or a "Gospel" which has converted those attributes into their opposites for all except a selfish "elect," and has taught (according to Augustine) that there are "infants in Hell a span-long," and (according to Calvin and his narrow-minded followers) that the bulk of the human race will be fiendishly tortured throughout the ages of eternity ?

May God have had mercy upon, and have enlightened in the World Beyond, those two theologically hard and cruel men. It was their teaching that made the Inquisition in Spain and the fires at Smithfield possible. It is their teaching that has cast such a blighting shadow, and lain as a horrible nightmare, upon Western theology. They so pared away, and taught others to pare away, the love and goodness of the Almighty, as to call forth that awful reply of an earnest man to a rigid Calvinist—"Sir, if what you say be Christianity, I never can become a Christian. *Your God is my devil.*"

Glance, now, at the bearing of the grand truths we have considered upon two of the experiences of our life that most affect us. We refer to (*a*) the experience that has come to all of us, viz, that of being severed by death from those we love best, and (*b*)

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the experience awaiting all, viz, that of facing, in one's own person, the fact of dying. Take the first. When the Desolating hand of Death has removed from our side a beloved one, it is a terrible and a mind-paralysing ordeal to be able only to focus our thoughts upon a grave in which a dear dead form has been laid ; when a loving man or woman, who has not realised the truth about a Spiritual World and a life after death, has to stand at a newly-raised mound and say, "There lies the being in whom all the noblest and best feelings of my nature centred themselves—Dead! Dead!"

Yes, it is a terrible experience; but a very common one. It ought not, after more than eighteen centuries of Christian teaching and preaching, to be a common one; but it is. Thousands and thousands of Christians who go to their Church or Chapel, who believe in the Saviour and reverence the Bible, have that experience. It should not be so; it would not be so if Christian teachers had taught the *whole* of revealed truth. But this is what they have not done. The pulpit, the theological works and the religious tracts, whatever else they may have done, have not shown *how much* the Religion of Jesus can lessen the pang of separation and remove "the sting of death."

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We do not mean that a future Life has not been taught; nor do we assert that there has not been a belief that something or other of departed ones has survived the "catastrophe" of dying, and that one day, ever so long ahead, all will come right—the dear "dead" one will again become the *real* man or woman. But we do mean that the teaching of the past as to what is beyond the grave has been very, very vague and uncomforting. The departed father, mother, husband, wife, child or friend has been viewed as *dead*, rather than as *living;* as lying in the churchyard, rather than as energising and advancing in a World of activity. Do you doubt the truth of this assertion? What mean, then, the skulls and crossbones on Christian tombstones; the broken columns; the funeral urns; the epitaphs eloquent on death, but significantly silent on *life?*

What mean the black clothes and the other gloomy symbols of pagan despair? What mean those religious services, in which figure catafalques and empty coffins, and black altar-frontals, and the monotonous chanting of dismal dirges and requiems by sombrely-vested priests? What means the custom of speaking of the departed as if they did not exist? What means it that the Church in past ages, and the Church of to-day, in teaching us not to for-

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get our dear ones at the throne of grace when they have gone hence, has made the grievous mistake of calling such intercessions "Prayers for the *Dead*," instead of "Prayers for the *living* Departed"? Are not all these things so many indications that the Christian world has not adequately grasped the import of the Saviour's words, spoken to a mourning woman, who, although she believed in a distant resurrection, did not understand the truth concerning an antecedent World of spirit and life—"Whosoever believeth in Me *shall never die.* Believest thou *this?*" That question was unanswered by Martha, and there are thousands, like her, whose imperfect knowledge of the Spiritual makes it impossible for them to say "yes" to it.

Now let us flash upon the experience of separation from dear ones the light of Divine truth as it reaches us through the medium of the Bible.

What does that light disclose? First, those dear ones of ours in a World of spirit, not as shapeless essences, not as comatose entities who have been robbed by Death of the power to see, to hear, to speak, to think, to feel, to love and to continue their interest in those they have left behind; but as beings who are not less human because the Almighty Father has seen fit to strip them of the

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rough cloak of the physical. We see, by the eye of reason and faith, spirits who are encased in spiritual bodies of form and organisation, which have faculties and powers surpassing our own, and which make their owners far more the *real* men and women than we, limited by the restrictions of coarse matter, can possibly be.

What does that light disclose? we ask again. That there exist marvellous possibilities of intercommunication between us and dear ones who are more completely in the Spiritual World than we at present are. That unseen by physical eyes, and unheard by physical ears, drawn by the mighty magnets of God-begotten love and sympathy, the departed husband may be often close beside the sorrowing widow; the mother by the orphaned child; the child by the weeping parent, and that they, although unseen and unperceived by us, may be God's ministers, God's angels of light from a higher sphere, to spiritually suggest to us, to help us, and to lead us to restfulness, to hope, to nobler thoughts, to truer life and to God.

Yes, and more than this does that light disclose. It shows us that there will be times when the obscuring veil of the physical will be drawn aside for some of us, even in the midst of the surroundings of common

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earthly life, and for all of us when we come to die; and that then will be seen and recognised those whom we "have loved long since, and lost awhile."

Once more we ask—What does that light disclose? A glorious World of spiritual intelligence, life and progress, over whose portal gleams the hope-inspiring word, "Excelsior"—"Higher"; a World of magnificent possibility for every human creature whom the Father loves, and for whom the Saviour has humbled Himself and died; a World in which all that is good and noble in our dear departed ones will, assuredly, be expanded and matured; where all that is evil and imperfect, even at the cost of painful discipline and pruning, will be eliminated and improved; where the partner, the parent and the child, will grow in the knowledge and love of God, and in likeness to His Christ, until they become the spirits of just men and women "made perfect," and at last shall be "numbered with God's saints in glory everlasting."

With such thoughts as these concerning the World of Spirit and our dear ones there, what more natural, more thoroughly Christ-like and consistent with sanctified common sense and real faith, than that we should pray for them!

To the Christian mourner, whose so-called

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"Evangelical" ideas will be shocked by these words, we commend the following incident.

Some time ago, a Low-Church clergyman called upon me, and in the course of conversation the subject of praying for the Departed was started. I was somewhat astonished when he said, "Shall I tell you how *I* came to use such prayers? It was when I was a little boy of about nine years of age," he continued. "On the evening of the day on which my father died, I was crying bitterly as I knelt down as usual at my mother's knees to say my prayers. I had been upstairs in the death-chamber, and the sight of the still, white face had terrified and distressed me. To comfort me, my mother (a good Wesleyan) told me I must not cry, that my father was *still alive*, and was thinking about and loving us still; that he had gone to another World, where he was with God, and God was taking care of him. I was glad of this, and ceased my weeping, and went on with my evening prayers. Presently I came to the part where I had always said, 'God bless father and mother.' I paused, and was just going to leave out the word 'father,' when my mother's words flashed across my mind—'Father is still alive, and is with God Who is taking care of him.'

"In a moment my mind was made up. If that

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was so, of course I must speak to God about him. So I prayed, 'God bless *father* who has gone to be with you, and mother.' From that evening I have never ceased to pray for him. Years afterwards my mother told me she thought that childish prayer was wrong, but she had not forbidden me using it, because it would have seemed, she said, had she done so, to contradict her words spoken to me when I was crying, and I might have asked a question that she would not have been able to answer—'Mother, *why* must I not speak to God about father, if father is alive and with God?'"

"Become as a little child," said Jesus. Yes, and I would to God that our teachers and preachers had less of the "doctrine" of the cold and unsympathetic theologians and schoolmen, and more of the God-implanted instinct, the faith, and the spiritual sense and perception of the little child!

One thing is absolutely certain. It is this: that those who pray for their dear ones Beyond are they who best realise the great fact of a World of Spirit, and extract the most comfort from the Gospel of Jesus when the shadow of bereavement is resting upon them.

Lastly, the grand truths considered in these pages must, if grasped, powerfully affect the experience

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of facing in one's own person the fact of dying. A good deal of the religious teaching, past and present, has created the idea that it is an indication of exalted piety to frequently concentrate the mind upon dying. To sit in a gloomy cell, in front of a skull and an hour-glass, and depressingly meditate on "Death"; to dig one's own grave in the monastery burial-ground, and sleep in one's coffin; to wearily and morbidly pore over a wretched little manual on "Mortality"; to afflict oneself by reading as a "religious" duty the melancholy musings of a mediæval "Father," who would have been all the better for a little more work; and in a score of other ways to force the mind to fix itself upon the thoughts of physical dissolution—these have been considered as excessively godly and improving exercises.

In the light of spiritual truth, as disclosed in the Word of God, we cannot so regard them. We think them to be exactly the opposite. We view them as ungodly exercises, inasmuch as they are calculated to retain "the sting of death" which Christ's Gospel is pledged to take away; and demoralising exercises, because it is not consistent with a Religion of *life* to expend our time and mental energies on brooding over *death*.

The fact is, there is no call for us, if we are hum-

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ble followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, and realise the truth of a Life Beyond, to bother ourselves at all about dying. Nay, more, we are not acting in harmony with the principles of *true* Christianity if we do so. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews stated of Jesus that He should deliver those persons "*who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*" (Heb. ii. 14 and 15 v.). The Gospel brought "life and immortality to light," and never intended that a Christian should focus his thoughts upon death and dissolution.

"Whosoever believeth in Me *shall never die*," said Jesus; "There is no Death! What seems so is transition," said the poet.

And so, by the light that streams from the Spiritual World, we perceive our concern to be as to living and not as to dying.

To live aright, because in mind, character and spirit we shall be in the Beyond what we make ourselves here. To see to it that we, who by our thoughts and feelings, and words and actions, are weaving the pattern on the tapestry of our Hereafter experience, may not in that Hereafter have "to be saved *so as by fire*,"—to painfully unpick the wrongly-worked stitches, and to sorrowfully weave them again.

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"Become as a little child," said the Lord of the Spiritual World. Yes; that is it. Dear little child! he is so brimful of life that he never thinks of death. "There is no Death" to him. He loves, believes in, trusts his father. If anyone said that that father was *not* good and kind and just, he would like to knock him down. He cheerfully lives out and enjoys the school-life in which his father has placed him; he never pretends to be sick of it, nor distresses his father (as some well-to-do Christians do in their hymns) by describing it as a "dreary wilderness," and by asking to be taken out of it.

But he lives and learns, and grows in knowledge and manliness in that preparatory school, until one day the father says, "My boy, I must put you in a higher school to complete your education." And the little fellow answers, "Father, I am ready; *you* know best; I am happy here, but I am sure I shall be happy there, since you will be my father still."

Dear little trustful child! Pointing to you, the King of Immortality has said to us teachers and preachers and theologians—"Go thou, think and do likewise."

THE END

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